A Complete Story by Joel Chandler Harris on Page 16.

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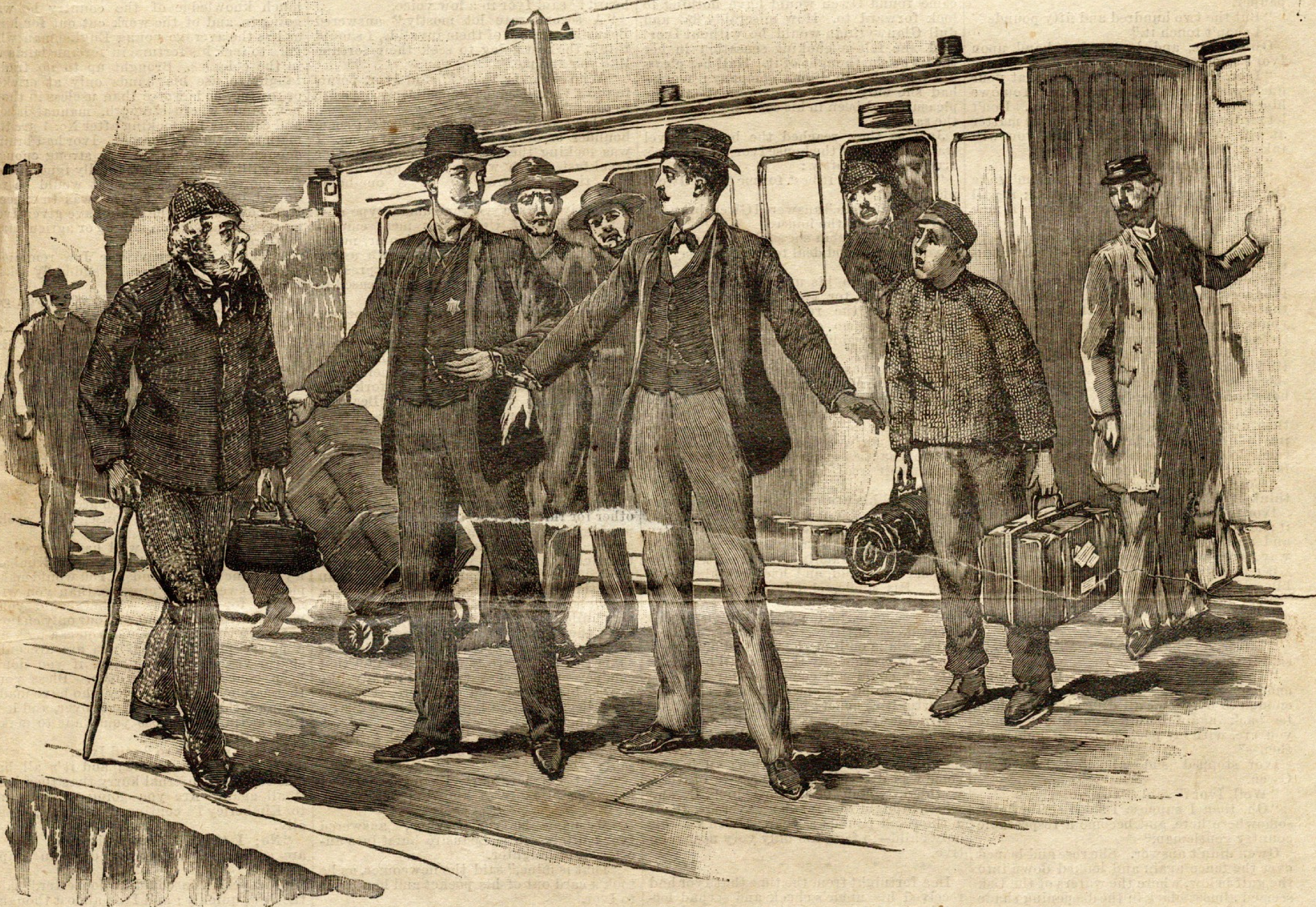

"WHAT IS THE CHARGE?" "MURDER!"

IN SEARCH OF GOLD.*

BY COLIN MIDDLETON,

Author of "The Fool of Destiny," "Innes of Blairavon," etc.

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CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH THE HERO'S FATE IS SHAPED.

"GAME! Set! Come and have some tea, Ivor. That's the second time I have beaten you to-day; you ought to be ashamed of yourself."

Ivor Gwynne laughed, picked up his coat and, coming round the net, joined his fair opponent, who awaited him.

They were both good to look upon. Ivor Gwynne, who had just finished his last term at Cambridge, was over six feet in height, broad and well-made; he had deep brown Welsh eyes, quick-glancing and bright, an aquiline nose, and a merry, bronzed face.

Gwendolen Llewellyn was one of those girls whom one would like to show to other people, and say, "Look, this is a typical English girl!" For a woman, she was very tall, but so perfectly proportioned that her height did not make her appear in the least ungainly. Hers was that healthy beauty which life in the open air alone produces; but, perhaps, her chief charm was a deep, soft contralto voice.

They walked side by side down a slope of turf until they reached a little summer-house at the foot of the garden. Far below ran the Usk—the Usk of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table; a dense oak wood clothed its opposite bank; beyond the wood in the distance lay the two peaks of the Brecon Beacons, hazy in the warm afternoon air. Both knew the scene by heart, for, although in no way related, they had lived nearly all their lives under the same roof.

"Here's tea," said Gwen, after they had sat in silence for about ten minutes.

"Any letters, Mary?"

"Yes, Miss," answered the maid; and handed two letters to Gwen and one to Ivor, while she placed the *Times* of the previous day beside the tray.

Ivor read his letter carefully, picked up the *Times*, and searched for a particular announcement, found it, laid down the paper again, and sighed.

Gwen finished her letters, looked up at Ivor with a smile, which fled quickly when she saw his face, and said:

"What is it, Ivor? Are you ill?"

For answer, Ivor handed her his letter. Gwen opened it and read as follows:

DEAR IVOR:—Had I known that all the trouble I have taken over your education would have resulted in this way, you may rest assured that it would never have been undertaken. After every possible advantage that a boy and a young man can have, your name appears in the Tripos list—where it does. I presume you have seen it. I consider your position the lowest possible. If it had been one lower, I should not have minded so much. A certain amount of notoriety, if not of honor, is attached to the Wooden Spoon, and the disgrace is to a certain extent covered by it. *Your* position on the list is disgraceful. I did not hope or expect you to be senior wrangler, but the opportunities I have afforded you gave me a right to expect that you would at least be *among* the wranglers. After this fiasco I consider that I can do nothing else but wash my hands of you altogether. I had

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hoped that you might be able to fill a position in my office, but it being obvious that you are incapable of work or sustained effort, such a course, on my part, would be suicidal. If two hundred and fifty pounds are of any service to you, they are at your disposal. Any expectations from me, at my death, will be doomed to disappointment. I could have forgiven anything but what you have shown me—ingratitude. I should be glad to hear from you *re* the two hundred and fifty pounds, after which any communication from you will be destroyed unopened.

Yours, very truly, RICHARD GWYNNE.

Gwen folded up the letter, and, looking up, said:

"Oh, Ivor dear, what does it mean?"

For reply Ivor handed her the *Times*, and pointed out his name in the Mathematical Tripos list. He was last but one among the Junior Optimes.

"Well," said Gwen, "what does that matter?"

Ivor smiled, as he said:

"It matters that instead of having any chance of entering a profession, I am a pauper."

"But the two hundred and fifty pounds?"

"I shan't touch it."

Gwen rose, and laying her hand upon Ivor's arm, said, quietly:

"Ivor, that is foolish. I knew that your uncle was a hard and cruel man. You owe him nothing in the way of affection. Don't let sentiment or pride enter into the matter at all. Write and tell him that you will take it."

"But that letter?"

"Never mind the letter. If you don't take the money, you will be very foolish; it will give you a start—help you to get to a new country."

Ivor started up.

"Right, Gwen; you are right—a new country. I will start at once."

Gwen's face fell at the alacrity with which Ivor accepted her suggestion. A look of hope that is only to be seen on the face of very young men had spread over Ivor's face; in an instant he had seen new lands open up before him—a fortune rolling in as if by magic. He stretched out his arms, and laughed, a short, eager laugh, at the prospect which hope had thus suddenly given him.

Gwen looked at him wistfully. Was she then, and had she been all these years, nothing to him? She sighed as she watched the eager look of expectancy pass over Ivor's face, and then said, quietly:

"Come, Ivor, have some tea; you can think of this afterwards."

Ivor took the tea mechanically and drank it; he doubled up a piece of bread and butter, and another, and ate them in an absent way, took a second cup of tea from Gwen without noticing it, and then said, more to himself than to Gwen:

"Yes, it is better, after all, to try a new country than to stew in a solicitor's office all one's life."

"Life is very hard in new countries, Ivor," said Gwen.

"That doesn't matter, dear. I am strong enough and young enough, and energetic enough to overcome all difficulties. I shall be back again before you know where you are, with my pockets full of gold, and then—"

Ivor stopped suddenly and looked at Gwen.

"Well, Ivor?" said Gwen, quietly.

"Oh, then I suppose I shall settle down somewhere here, and become a respectable country gentleman."

Gwen didn't answer. She rose and leaned over the fence again and looked down into the gulf below, where the waters of the Usk seemed almost black in the deepening shade of the oak wood on the opposite bank. Ivor rose too, placed himself beside her, and said:

"I wonder when I shall see this again with you, Gwen. You will write to me, when I am away, won't you, dear?"

"Of course I will. Come, let us go up to the house. Father will be home from Brecon soon, and it is nearly time to dress for dinner."

They walked side by side up the long slope of short, thick turf, in silence.

They had been in love with each other, without knowing it, any time for the last five years. Gwen was just twenty and Ivor twenty-three. They had lived in the same house together since Ivor first went to school, and had grown so accustomed to each other that they did not know what life would be apart. When Ivor had been at school or Cambridge, they had corresponded two or three times a week, writing their thoughts and aspirations just as they came into the mind of each. There had been no restraint of any sort; they did not know that they were in love with each other; they had never thought of the matter from that point of view.

During Ivor's last years at school and while he was at Cambridge he had felt restless and uneasy and fretful for the first few days of term, and never could make out why; it was only when the newer interests of cricket or boating began again that he found he could throw off his restlessness and feeling of solitude. At home at Glanwythian, Gwen had the same feelings. She would moon about the grounds or paddle up under the trees on the Usk with a curious physical pain in her breast which she could not describe, until Ivor's first letter should have arrived, when her whole demeanor would change, and she would go singing about the house—a new being. Again, toward the end of term, she would fly in and out of his room, seeing that everything was in order, filling it with the choicest flowers in the conservatory or the garden, doing everything that a woman's soft hands could do, to make him comfortable and appreciate his home-coming; for was not this his home? He had had no other since his father died seventeen years before.

In the school holidays or University vacations they two would wander all day long over the hills on foot or on horseback, and there was no nook within thirty miles of Glanwythian which they did not know. In summer they would be up at dawn and follow the otter hounds until well on in the afternoon, and finish up the day with lawn tennis. In autumn there was cub and in winter fox hunting. Gwen never seemed to be tired; she was as strong physically and constitutionally as a man, and made for Ivor a companion whom he never could have found among his male friends.

And all this charming life of the last six or seven years was suddenly to be changed. That was the thought which occupied both their minds as they strolled slowly up the slope toward the house. When the holidays came round Gwen would have nothing to look forward to. How miserably flat and dull Glanwythian would be without Ivor! And she felt a choking sensation in her throat as she thought of it. Half her pleasure had been in Ivor's company; more—had she only dared to confess it—*all* the pleasure had been in his company. Ivor felt the same.

Just as they reached the broad gravel walk in front of the house Ivor took Gwen's arm, and said, softly:

"Do you think it best for me to go, Gwennie?"

"Yes, Ivor, I do," answered Gwen, bravely, and passed into the house.

Gwen meant what she said, but she would have given a good deal to be able to say the reverse.

Ivor wrote to his uncle, who answered with a check for two hundred and fifty pounds, and the remark: "Mr. Richard Gwynne has no desire to see Mr. Ivor Gwynne, or to hold any further communication with him."

Ivor sighed as he read these lines, not because he loved his uncle—he didn't—but because he disliked to have anything in the shape of a quarrel with any man. He was one of those easy-going *laissez faire* people who need an event of great moment to arouse what lies undermost, and who never show their real nature except at great crises.

He owed his uncle much—of that he was well aware. His mother had died at his birth, and his father—a struggling country parson, son of a younger son of a very old and honorable family—had died when he was six years old, and had left him destitute. His uncle, chiefly from mercenary motives, had sent him to one of the lesser public schools, and then to Cambridge, at his own cost entirely. And now—well, Ivor had no claim on him; he had had his education, and presumably that was all he was to get. He could not complain—far from it; he ought to be extremely thankful for the opportunities he had had.

Mr. Llewellyn was his father's oldest friend, who had taken Ivor and looked after him as his own son ever since Ivor's father had died. He wasn't very rich; all his income was derived from the estate of Glanwythian, which he farmed himself, and which brought him in, on an average, about a thousand pounds a year. Gwen was his only child—in fact, his only very near relative.

* * * * * *

In a fortnight from the time that Ivor had received his uncle's check and second letter, he was driving away from Glanwythian, bound for South Africa.

As the dog-cart drove away from the porch, Ivor turned and waved his hand to Gwen, whose face was sad and pale, while two great tears rolled down her cheeks and fell, unheeded, on her bosom.

"Good-bye." The sad little words were said, and Ivor was on his way to seek his fortune in the great world.

CHAPTER II.

OUTWARD BOUND.

When Ivor started, he had only thought of that fortune which he was to make as a thing apart, as a desirable thing, as a thing, in fact, which it is every Englishman's bounden duty to attempt to make. Now that the shores of England had hid themselves from view, that fortune became inseparably bound up with Gwen.

After three days' sea-sickness he found his place at table, and had just sat down to luncheon, when a hand laid on his shoulder made him turn round.

"Beausire! Where on earth are you going?"

"To the diamond fields, Ivor, my boy." And he sat down in the seat next to Ivor. "And you?"

"I am going there, too."

"Good business," said Beausire, delighted. "We will go shares."

"But why are you going out?" asked Ivor.

"Had fearful turn-up with the governor over the schools. I was 'spun' for the Tripos, you know."

"I saw your name wasn't there. I didn't do much better, and that's why I am going out to the Cape."

"By Jove! it's a rum thing that we should be in the same boat, in more ways than one, too. You know I am the seventh son and my governor is as poor as a rat; my eldest brother, the Right Honorable Viscount Brinksborough, does not love me, as I have often told you, and talked about me as a disgrace to the family and a lot of other nonsense, till I lost my hair and told them that if they would put me out of the country I wouldn't bother them again. They seemed glad enough to get rid of me, and I don't care much if I never see them again. Anyhow, it is better to be free than to lie rotting in a miserable country parsonage. That's about what my fate would have been at home."

Ivor smiled as he answered:

"Our cases are very much alike. I am regarded as a disgrace, and left to my own resources."

"But you were in the lists. I saw your name somewhere in the Junior Ops."

"Last but one. My uncle thought that a disgrace, you see."

"By gad! I should have been as proud as a peacock if I had been there instead of you."

"What sort of passengers are there on board?" said Ivor in a low voice.

"A second-rate lot mostly," answered Beausire; "most of them invalids, I should think, the rest going to seek their fortune like you and me."

"Who sits over there?" said Ivor, pointing to a vacant place immediately opposite to himself.

"Don't know; hasn't appeared yet; some bounder or other like the rest of them. I was looking them over this morning after breakfast, which was my first appearance, and they appeared to be a one-horse crew."

Beausire was a very common type of a certain class of University men, empty-headed, slangy, of no particular moral standard; in fact, what is known as "a loose fish" in his own eminently expressive *argot*, and Ivor was by no means pleased to have met him.

At dinner time the place opposite Ivor was still vacant; after some ten minutes, however, a man came in quietly and slipped into the seat. Ivor and Beausire looked up at the same time at the newcomer. Ivor simply dropped his knife and fork and gazed at him in amazement. Beausire looked from Ivor to the stranger, and from the stranger to Ivor, and then, without the slightest warning, burst into a peal of laughter. The other passengers stared, but being unaware of the cause of his merriment, went on again with their dinner. Ivor and the newcomer looked at each other for full thirty seconds, Ivor's face expressing amazement and fear, the stranger's a sort of cynical amusement. Except for the fact that the man who had just come in must have been a year or two older than Ivor, he and Ivor might have been twin brothers. They were of the same height and build, had the same colored hair and eyes, the same features in every respect; their hawk noses were of the same size and shape; in fact, were it not for the fact that the newcomer's eyes were not steady like Ivor's, but shifty and insincere, it would have been practically impossible to distinguish them.

The stranger, after the mutual scrutiny had come to an end, bowed to Ivor and said:

"Most extraordinary likeness. May I have the pleasure of knowing your name, sir?"

"My name is Ivor Gwynne," answered Ivor politely, while Beausire burst into another fit of laughter.

"That is mine," said the newcomer, as he took a card out of his pocket and handed it to Ivor.

"'Moses Löwe, Diamond Merchant,'" read Ivor.

"If you are doing any business at the Cape, shall be glad to be of any service to you," said the Jew, bowing again. Even the tones of their voices were identical.

Ivor muttered something unintelligible, and went on with his dinner.

The Jew was most affable, and evinced a strong determination to attach himself to Ivor, whether he would or no. The only other people with whom the Jew talked were two Jewish ladies, with whom he appeared to be on terms of great intimacy.

On the evening of the fifth day out, Beausire, Ivor and the Jew were sitting on deck chairs after dinner. Mr. Löwe was expatiating upon the general prosperity of South Africa, when Ivor, who had been gazing out to sea in front of him, pointed with his hand and said:

"What's that?"

All three rose and peered out over the sea. Far in the distance, over the horizon, a soft, rose-colored cone seemed to rise out of the sea and pierce the sky. It was the only piece of color to break the monotony of sky and sea in all that limitless expanse. As the sun sank into the deep, the cone seemed to brighten for an instant and then slowly fade from view.

"That's the Peak of Teneriffe," said Löwe. "We shall be in Santa Cruz Bay in five or six hours."

"The Peak of Teneriffe," murmured Ivor. "How wonderfully beautiful it was!"

Löwe smiled and answered:

"When you have seen it ten or a dozen times, as I have, just as we have seen it to-night, you won't think much of it."

"Have you been so often out to the Cape as that?" asked Ivor, interested in spite of himself.

"Two or three times a year, back and forward, at least. One year I made the journey five times."

Beausire yawned and walked aft, leaving Ivor and the Jew together.

"You ought to know the Cape pretty well by this time, then."

"I believe you," said the Jew, with a wink full of cunning. "There are very few people who know the out-of-the-way parts of South Africa, from Kimberley to Cape Town or Port Elizabeth, as well as I do."

"Does your trade take you about the country so much? I should have thought that England was the best market for your goods."

Löwe looked at Ivor for just a second out of the corner of his eye, and said, dryly:

"Yes, it is, on the whole."

Ivor had absolutely no knowledge of the country to which he was going. He had a vague idea that the diamond fields were worked on the lines of the old diggings in Australia; that diamonds were to be had for the mere trouble of pegging out a claim and working it. He had, in fact, about as much knowledge of the country he was going to, and of the work cut out for him, as has the average young Englishman who goes to seek his fortune in foreign lands or in the colonies. Brought up to no trade, taught to use his hands only at cricket or rowing, he is worse than useless in those new lands where strength, manual labor, and capacity for looking after No. 1 are the main essentials to success. Ivor had brains enough to succeed; he was strong enough and willing enough, but totally ignorant of the merest outlines of what would be required of him or what he was to expect. Had Löwe wished, he could have given Ivor no reliable advice on mining or agricultural matters.

After his last remark the Jew remained silent for a while, then he suddenly asked Ivor:

"What are *you* going to do when you get out to the Cape?"

"I am going up to the diamond fields—to Kimberley or Beaconsfield—to mine for diamonds."

"As a member of a company?"

"No; on my own account."

"Do you propose to prospect?"

Iver looked astonished as he answered:

"No. There is no necessity to do that, is there?"

Löwe laughed a short, unpleasant laugh, and said:

"It strikes me, young sir, that you don't know much about what you are in for."

After a considerable pause, Löwe spoke again:

"You might just as well have stayed at home, my young friend, as go out to Kimberley to mine for diamonds. You would make more at sweeping a crossing than you will mining for diamonds. What could your people have been about? Your only chance out there is share-broking. You can pick up a pretty pile at that if you are are only sharp—yes, and drop it, too, if you don't keep your weather-eye open. Bless you, there are men at Kimberley who have made fortunes three and four times over, and lost them again. I suppose you want to make money quick?"

"Yes; I suppose so," said Ivor.

"H'm, most people do; and it's all because of their infernal hurry that they lose it all again. Are you going straight up to Kimberley?" continued the Jew, casually.

"No; I think Mr. Beausire and and I are going to spend a few days in Cape Town."

"Ah, yes; you couldn't do better," said the Jew, quickly; and Ivor almost thought he detected a note of satisfaction. "Take a little holiday while you can, for when you get to Kimberley you won't have much time to think of holidays. If you want to make money there, you must be on the spot, and stay on the spot. It is a bigger gamble than the Stock Exchange, and more continuous."

"Is that the only way of making money up there now, then?" asked Ivor, in a tone of disappointment.

"The only way of making a fortune. You can become a 'gaffer' to the niggers if you like, or help in a store, but you won't make much money at those games. You are much too late in the day if you think that you are going to drop into some nice snug little claim plug full of diamonds. Have you any conception of what the diamond fields are like?"

"No," said Ivor, in rather a shamefaced way.

The Jew expectorated in a contemptuous manner, and said:

"Well, if this isn't the softest thing! What are your parents about, young man?"

"I have no parents," answered Ivor, coldly, "and I am my own master."

"Don't be huffed, young 'un. I don't mean to insult you, but you really ought to have found out something about matters before you started. I will just tell you how things are there. You are years behind the fair. Don't you know that the Kimberley mine is in the hands of one big company; that they bought up all the original adventurers by degrees, and that now, instead of a number of separate claims, Kimberley mine is one vast hole belonging to that company? Why, you can't even see it without all sorts of formalities and 'permits;' and as for mining diamonds on your own account, you couldn't do it to save your life Where would you go? At Du Toit's Pan—what they call the Beaconsfield nowadays—there are three companies who have th whole mine. Where else would you go? No, sir; what you've got to do if you want to make money is to go in for share-broking, and if you aren't a fool, just clear out when you have made a comfortable pile, or you'll drop every penny of it, as sure as your name's Gwynne. It's the most fascinating thing in the world, is share-broking in Kimberley. Do you know anything of share-broking?"

Ivor had to confess that he didn't. He began to feel that as far as knowledge of the world went, he was as innocent as a babe compared with his self-constituted friend.

"Well, it's like this," said the Jew: and he entered into a dry and detailed account of the mysteries of "calls" and "puts."

Ivor listened with attention, and became enthusiastic over the possibilities which opened before him. One thing only troubled him. The Jew, feeling his ground carefully, had hinted at sharp practices of various kinds, which would hasten fortune, and Ivor had winced and said:

"I presume that all the transactions are fair and aboveboard?"

"In so far as any betting transaction is fair, share-broking at Kimberley is fair. It is the biggest gamble in the world, and if you don't keep your eyes open, you will be 'left' as sure as a gun. Times have been slack lately, but things have begun to boom again, and you stand a rare chance of netting a 'pot.'"

"Why don't you go in for broking?" asked Ivor.

The low, cunning leer overspread the Jew's face again, and he answered:

"Buying and selling diamonds is a safer though slower method of making money. Besides, I have had enough of it. If I can manage the business I am going out for successfully this time, I shall chuck the whole thing and settle in England."

The rest of the voyage was uneventful, and at dawn on an August morning they steamed into Table Bay.

CHAPTER III.

IVOR'S FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF SOUTH AFRICA —MOSTLY PLEASANT.

As they steamed into the bay Ivor saw the long lines of convicts filing out to their monotonous toil on the breakwater; many a one of them men who had lived in good positions in the old country before the glitter of diamonds had blinded their vision and their moral sense, and they had been condemned to "the breakwater" for the crime which is so summarily and hardly dealt with in South Africa. I. D. B.—as it is always called there—or illicit diamond buying, is the one crime for which no sympathy can be enlisted at the Cape. An I. D. B., or an accessory before or after the fact, may rest assured that if he be arrested, his sentence will be "fourteen years on the breakwater." Ivor got this information from the quartermaster, whom he had asked how the labor for the breakwater was obtained. Later he knew that the passion for those glittering stones had brought many a dainty woman to a convict's prison, and that, despite the unfailing sentence, I. D. B. was carried on with more or less success constantly. It struck him as a curious illustration of the irony of fate that—as individuals—Englishmen should punish with such severity people who stole diamonds from a spot which they, as a nation, had practically stolen from the Boers. Justice has strange ways.

Before they came in alongside the pier, Löwe came up to say good-bye to Ivor.

"Let me advise you to stay ten days or a fortnight in Cape Town, Mr. Gwynne. Get yourself accustomed to the ways of the people a bit before you come up to Kimberley. Learn all you can of the hang of politics, and get acquainted with the ups and downs of the share market. I am going straight to Kimberley, as my business is urgent."

"What is your address?"

"I haven't got one at Kimberley. I am in and out of the place constantly. Go to Mrs. Jardine's, the Queen's Hotel, and they'll tell you."

"Do they know you there?"

"Know me? I rather think they do. Why, ask any man you meet in Kimberley if he knows Moses Löwe, and he'll laugh at you. They know me as well as they know the picture of Queen Victoria or Bob M'Nab."

Ivor thanked him, and they parted. Ivor saw the Jew hurry away from the Custom House, followed by the two Jewish ladies, and he and Beausire went up to the International Hotel.

Beausire had done his best to avoid Löwe's company on the ship after the first few days, and as they were going up to the hotel he said to Ivor:

"I am glad we've got rid of that bounder, at any rate. What on earth made you take to him so, Ivor?"

"I didn't take to him, my dear chap—he took to me. He was useful enough in his way, and gave me a heap of information which would have taken me long enough to learn by experience. We shall meet him again at Kimberley."

"H'mph! I should be very much inclined to mistrust his information. You may depend upon it, if it is worth anything, that you will have to pay for it, and pretty dearly, too. A Jew don't do anything gratuitously, as far as my little experience of them goes. If we do meet him at Kimberley, I, for one, don't mean to have much to do with him."

After they had seen all that was to be seen in Cape Town, and had visited Wynberg and other towns in the neighborhood, Ivor suggested that they should start for Kimberley, as he was anxious to begin to make money.

"Oh, there's heaps of time to make money later on. It's easy made here," Beausire had answered.

"And as easily lost, so Löwe told me."

"Bah! Everything that Löwe told you needn't be true; much more probably lies, coming from him. I should cut the connection, if I were you, Ivor; it doesn't do you any credit, old chap."

"Why are you so virulent against the man? He put himself out of the way to be pleasant to me."

"Because I hate his class in general, and this one in particular. I regard it as a positive insult that he should be so confoundedly like you."

Ivor laughed as he answered:

"That's all nonsense; the man can't help his appearance any more than I can."

"Then he ought to."

"We are getting away from the point, and that is: Are you coming up to Kimberley now?"

"No, I am not. I intend to wait here till I get tired of it, which will probably be in three or four days, and then I will come with you."

"All right. I will wait four more days, then we will start."

"It is settled, I suppose, that we go into partnership up there?"

Ivor hesitated for a moment, and then said:

"Well, Beausire, I must be frank with you. I came out here, as you know, in dead earnest. I mean to work like a galley-slave to make some kind of a fortune, and if we go into partnership I shall expect you to do the same. I have only something under two hundred pounds to put into the firm. I don't know what you have."

"I'll put in whatever you do," interposed Beausire.

"Very well; but solely on condition that you do your share of the work."

"All right, old man. I will do my share of the work, only we may as well have a 'spree' as long as we can."

Ivor was not easy in his mind about this partnership. He knew that Beausire had at Cambridge shown no capacity for work, and all his time seemed to be taken up in considering how best to enjoy himself. Ivor had nothing in common with Beausire, whose code of morals was very different from his, and yet he felt that even the small addition of capital which Beausire could offer might just make the difference between success and failure; and, moreover, there was that feeling of brotherhood which college life gives. If Beausire would only devote his attention to work, then he might be of some service; but Ivor had no idea of allowing him to regard himself as a sleeping partner.

Three days passed, and Ivor had made up his mind to go up to Kimberley on the following day. Beausire was as yet undecided. He had fallen in with a party of wandering Englishmen—young men of fortune—who were "doing" the world, and seemed to be attracted by their society. At any rate, if he did not actually accompany Ivor, he would follow him in three or four days at the utmost. Ivor was uneasy; he did not like to break off all connection with Beausire in a brusque and rough manner, yet he had made up his mind that he would have to be firm on the point.

He strolled down to the pier. A Castle boat was in, homeward bound; she was just about to start. "Any more for the shore?" was ringing out along the decks. Ivor glanced casually over the crowd of passengers assembled on the upper deck, and saw to his amazement, somewhat apart from the general crowd, the two Jewish ladies who had accompanied him from England in the *Asiatic*.

There was no doubt about it. Glancing in his direction, they caught sight of him, and simultaneously turned away and walked forward. The ship cast off, the last good-bys were waved from the pier, and the great screw began to revolve slowly as she passed out from the pier on the way to England.

Ivor was astonished. Within a few days these ladies had been up and down from Kimberley, and were on their way home again. He walked slowly back to the hotel musing on this curious coincidence.

At the entrance to the hotel Beausire was standing talking to one of the young Englishmen whom he had fallen in with.

As Ivor approached he heard the young Englishman say:

"You may as well come. It won't take us more than a fortnight or three weeks, and that won't make much difference to you, especially if you are going to spend your life here."

Beausire laughed, and at that moment Ivor came into the hotel.

"What do you say about it, Ivor?"

"About what?"

"These fellows—Montgomery and Handasyde—want me to go on a shooting expedition with them—antelopes—before I start for Kimberley."

"You may please yourself; but in that case I think it would be as well if we worked on our own hook. I am going to Kimberley to-morrow, whatever happens."

"All right, old chap. I daresay I'll come too. I shan't settle just yet, Montgomery."

Montgomery shrugged his shoulders and walked away, and Ivor said to Beausire:

"I was down at the pier just now, and saw those two Jew girls who came out with us starting on a Castle boat for England. What on earth can have induced them to come out to the Cape for a fortnight, and include a four-days' journey to Kimberley and back in their programme?"

"Some devilment or other, you may be sure. In league with your double, Löwe, I suppose. I wish you hadn't had so much to do with him. You take my word for it, he won't do you any credit whenever you come across him. Have you finally settled to go to Kimberley to-morrow?"

"Yes. And you?"

"I think so. I'll just have another talk with these fellows first."

As Ivor expected, on the following morning Beausire came to him and said:

"I have decided to go with these men on their shooting expedition. They assure me that it won't take them more than three weeks at the most."

"Very well. I will give you the three weeks. If you are not in Kimberley, say, in twenty-five days from now, I may conclude that all question as to partnership between us is off."

"Yes, but I am sure to be there. I think that fate has thrown us together for a purpose, and I don't mean to desert your lucky star."

"We have yet to prove that it is a lucky one," answered Ivor, laughing.

They parted, and Ivor started on his way to the diamond fields.

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN IVOR'S TROUBLES BEGIN.

Nothing of interest occurred until they reached De Aar, the junction where the Port Elizabeth train joins that from Cape Town, when many passengers came into the train.

Into Ivor's carriage came two smartly-dressed, youngish men, who immediately began to discuss Cape politics—a truly fertile field of argument. In a country torn by factions, where Englishmen and Boers are constantly at loggerheads—in a country where no definite and continuous policy is maintained by England—it is little wonder that trouble is constantly being brewed.

There was also an old Scotchman in the carriage, who listened to the remarks of his companions with a dry smile, and occasionally interjected a remark, pertinent and pithy, to which the younger men listened with attention.

Ivor was silent. He preferred to listen, more especially as he was gaining information—of sorts—without having to take the trouble to ask for it.

The train rattled along until they reached Hopetown, where the railway crosses the Orange River. Ivor had noticed on the way up that many of the streams were streams in name only, as there was no water in their beds, and thereby proved by personal observation one of the three sayings about South Africa. At Hopetown there seemed to be unusual excitement. It was a small, unimportant spot, so far as Ivor could see, and yet the station had an appearance of importance. Presently a man came running along the train, crying, "Telegram for Mr. Stein," followed by another who called, "Telegram for Mr. Low." Up and down the train they went, and Ivor watched them with interest.

Directly the old Scotchman heard the cry he became as brisk and eager as Ivor. He put his head out of the window and exchanged a few words with a man who had looked into their carriage with a curious, searching gaze. He looked with particular attention at Ivor.

As the train moved on, Ivor asked the old man what it all meant.

"I. D. B.," answered the old man, laconically. Then he added: "That telegram trick is played out; it only answers for greenhorns."

"What do you mean?"

"Those were bogus telegrams, of course."

"Bogus telegrams!"

"Aye, bogus telegrams. There's been a big steal on up at Kimberley or Du Toit's Pan. Mon, I ken fine the last time when it was a matter o' two or three thousand pounds. They war na sae keen as they are the day."

Ivor looked at his companion in astonishment, and the two other young men in the carriage leaned forward with an air of expectancy, as the old man rolled his tongue in his cheek preparatory to telling his tale.

"Ye'll no remember it, sirs, if ye were not in the country at the time, because I find that they kind o' things are not of sufficient importance to be reported at length in the papers in the old country. It was a matter of three thousand pounds, and they thought Lowie, the Jew, was in it."

Ivor started.

"Well, sir?"

"Did you say Löwe?" asked Ivor.

"Ay; and ye're the very spittin' image of him yersel', and that's not a compliment, young sir, for you're like one of the biggest blackguards that ever stepped in shoe leather. Did you happen to know him, then?"

"He came out in the *Asiatic* with me, and I saw a good deal of him," answered Ivor.

"Then you saw a good deal of a man who—if he isn't hanged in the interval—will spend fourteen years on the breakwater before he is many months older, or I'm a Dutchman. Don't you ever have anything to do with that man, if you will take an old man's advice. Bob M'Nab is an angel to him, and *his* chance of heaven isn't what you would call first-class. Well, to get on with the story. As I tell you, they thought Lowie was in it, and they would do anything to convict him. He'd been up two or three times already, and never could get any certain evidence against him, or Judge Harris would have nicked him in no time. It was then that they started the bogus telegram trick, and they plastered this line with telegrams from De Aar to Kimberley, and from the Cape to De Aar; they addressed them to every Jew name they could think on, with a sprinkling of Lowies at every few stations, but they never drew him. They had detectives on at every station, and they do say that he travelled the whole way on a nigger train dressed as an old Kaffir woman. How he must have laughed at it all! Oh, he's a cunning devil, is Lowie, and if you'll take my advice, my young friend, you'll give him a wide berth. His friendship won't do any man any good, don't you make any mistake."

The old gentleman mopped his face with a red bandana handkerchief.

And Ivor said:

"But have they ever proved anything against him?"

"No, they haven't. You don't want to *prove* anything against a man with a face like that. *That's* proof enough that he ought to be hanged; and if I was you I would grow my beard, for you two are as like as them two fellows in Shakespeare, and it's half the way to convicting you of a crime to be like Lowie. Mark my words, that man will be hanged before he dies. I don't suppose that the hanging will kill him; it takes more than hanging to kill vermin of that sort."

"You seem very bitter against him, sir," said Ivor, timidly.

"Bitter! Of course I'm bitter; it's men like him that prevent Kimberley from being a great center of civilization, as it ought to be."

At this point the two young men who had got in at De Aar looked at each other and smiled.

The old gentleman intercepted the look, noted the smile, and continued:

"The center of civilization! There's no reason against it except Lowie and people like him, and because Englishmen, out of England, think they can make beasts of themselves with impunity."

Both the young men laughed audibly, and the old gentleman, with a sniff of contempt at them, turned to Ivor, and said:

"And what may you be going to do with yourself at Kimberley?"

"I am thinking of taking to share-broking. Mr. Löwe, however, suggested it to me, and it may not, in consequence, meet with your approval. He is a diamond merchant himself, I believe."

"Diamond merchant!" said the old man, contemptuously, answering the latter part of Ivor's remarks first. "A pretty diamond merchant he is. Diamond thief, you mean! I will lay a wager that most of the diamonds he buys comes over the compound wall. H'm, you might do worse than share-broking, if you can keep your head. Only, take my advice—you mayn't see me again, because I'm going on to Johannesburg, and then for a holiday to auld Scotland, and, being an old man, may never come back again. As soon as you have made a decent pile—don't go for a big fortune—clear out, or you'll lose it all again, and make it and lose it again and again, till you rot here of over-excitement, over-work, too much whisky, or one of those things which kill men off here. Don't you forget it; set yourself a sum—not too big—and when you have made it, run for it, or the fascination of piling up money will get too strong for you, and you will never leave."

"I am sure it is very kind of you to take this trouble in explaining things to me," said Ivor.

"Advice is cheap, and, in consequence, never followed; but I make a point of giving it to any likely young man I come across, on the off-chance that he may follow it; and although you have got the features of that scamp Lowie, I see that you are really green, or you wouldn't have got old Jack Neilson to talk to you in a hurry."

Shortly after this Ivor went to sleep in the corner of his carriage, and being worn out with his long, dusty journey, an expression came over his face which made it look older.

Old Neilson glanced at him from time to time, while the two young men who had got in at De Aar carried on their conversation in an undertone. The old Scotchman was obviously uneasy in his mind; he could not keep his eyes off Ivor, and he shifted about in his seat. Ivor slept on unconsciously, and in his sleep he murmured of Gwen and Glanwythian. Neilson at last muttered to himself under his breath. "It's most extraordinar'. I would na swear that he wasn't Lowie now." He closed his eyes after a time, and made an effort to sleep, but as he woke with a start directly he began to dose, he gave it up, and contented himself with glancing constantly at Ivor, and muttering to himself.

As they were nearing Kimberley Ivor awoke, and, rubbing his eyes, said to Neilson, with a smile:

"I am afraid I have been asleep."

When Neilson noted Ivor's smile he seemed reassured, and answered, pleasantly:

"The best thing you could do. We are quite close to Kimberley now!"

"Are you going to stay at all in Kimberley?"

"No; I am going on at once. Where are you going to put up?"

"At Mrs. Jardine's, I believe."

"You couldn't do better; but I believe

that blackguard Lowie hangs about there a good deal."

Ivor smiled, and Neilson looked at him again suspiciously, as he answered:

"It was he who advised me to go there."

"H'mph," grunted Neilson.

"I am sure I am very much obliged to you, Mr. Neilson, for the hints and information you have been kind enough to give me."

"No thanks necessary, young man. Here we are at Kimberley."

"Good-bye," said Ivor, holding out his hand.

"Good-bye, sir, good-bye. Keep your eyes open, and steer clear of whisky, and I daresay you'll do. No, you get out first. I have a lot of small traps to get together here."

Ivor jumped out, looked about him for a second or two, and was then about to see after his luggage, when he noted a pair of keen eyes scanning his face very closely. In another instant he was aware of a handcuff being clasped on his wrist, and as he turned to remonstrate, a voice said in his ear:

"Well, I didn't think you'd be such a flat as to turn up here again."

Ivor, flushed and angry, insulted to the quick, demanded loudly what was the cause of his arrest. The detective laughed and shrugged his shoulders.

Ivor repeated his question, and the detective replied in a vicious tone:

"Come, now, Löwe, don't make an ass of yourself. Come on as quietly as you can."

At this moment old Neilson came up, and seeing Ivor handcuffed to the detective, he said, aloud:

"Heavens! it was Lowie, after all!"

He gazed at Ivor and shook his head sadly and said:

"I am afraid my excellent advice won't be of much service to you, sir."

Ivor, now pale as death, said to the detective, in a hoarse tone of voice:

"This is a horrible mistake. I am not Löwe. He came up here a fortnight ago."

"I know all about that. Now, then, come along; it is no use stopping here making a scene."

Ivor saw that remonstrance was hopeless, and moved away with his head on his chest.

As he and the detective started, Neilson came up to the detective and said:

"What is the charge?"

"Murder!" answered the detective laconically.

Ivor spent that night in Kimberley jail.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT—NO. 1.]

DARBY, THE BEAR-HUNTER OF ALASKA.*

BY SEWARD W. HOPKINS,

Author of "In the China Sea," "Two Gentlemen of Hawaii," etc.

["DARBY, THE BEAR-HUNTER OF ALASKA" was commenced in No. 47. Back numbers of the *Ledger*, containing the opening chapters of this story, can be obtained of all Newsdealers. *Even if the News-dealer is out of back numbers, he will order them for you, if you request him to do so.*]

CHAPTER XVI.

DISMAY, bitter disappointment and anger were our dominant emotions as we saw the sled we had been following shooting off in the distance, and we, standing helpless, unable to renew the pursuit. In a few minutes it was out of sight beyond a clump of firs.

"Will not the single reindeer drag us forward?" I asked, my voice trembling, so great was the excitement I felt.

Maxom shook his head sadly.

"No," he replied, "not now, at least. The poor animal has done noble work, and is too far spent for us to think of trying to pursue with him alone. Poor beast!" he continued, stooping and petting the dying reindeer. "You did well. It was not your fault that we failed. You have fallen a victim to the wickedness and perfidy of man. Poor beast!"

"What are *we* to do, Maxom?" demanded Hadleigh. "You seem to think the life of that reindeer is of more importance than our own. I repeat, what are *we* to do?"

Maxom looked up, and it was evident from the calm scrutiny that he gave Hadleigh that he *did* just at that moment regard the life of the reindeer as more important than that of Hadleigh.

"What are we going to do?" he repeated. "I'll tell you what we are going to do. We are going to rescue Julia and Madge Marshall, or die in the attempt."

"But see here, my good fellow," said Hadleigh, with what was almost a groan. "What good will it do them if *we* die, don't you see? Dead men can't rescue anybody. What's the use of going farther into danger?"

"You are a faithful lover," I said, bitterly. "If that is all you care for the girl you claim will some day be your wife, I don't congratulate *her*, that's flat."

Hadleigh looked away across the snowy waste a moment, and his face flushed.

"I learned something over this affair," he said, and I thought his voice sounded vindictive. "Julia was engaged to Maxom, and I didn't know it, don't you see."

Maxom's lip curled.

"Then your ardor for your cousin's safety cooled as soon as you learned she loved me," said the Bear-Hunter. "You are a noble specimen, truly. A cousin like you is not a relation to be proud of."

"But I say," whined Hadleigh, who saw readily enough that he could not afford to quarrel with Maxom in our present predicament, "drop it, can't you? I don't care whom she marries, if I can only get out of this scrape alive. I don't see what the deuce I came for, anyhow."

"Nor I," said Maxom, sententiously, as he began to relieve the dying reindeer of the harness.

"What is your plan?" I asked, moving to his side and assisting him.

"We must make the best of circumstances and camp here for the night," he replied. "It is already late, and do you not notice a change in the atmosphere?"

"I had thought it was getting warmer," I replied.

"So it is," he said. "But I do not like this kind of a rise in temperature. Do you not notice that the wind has died away somewhat? And see that threatening sky! We are going to have a snowstorm, and unless I am mistaken, it is going to be a bad one. With our one remaining reindeer we could not get through it, and would, perhaps, be overcome at some spot where death would be certain. Here we have an opportunity to make a shelter. We must be about it, too, or it will be too late."

"Shelter!" I cried. "What sort of shelter can you find in this dreary waste? Shall we take to the woods? Those scrawny trees would not shelter us from a storm."

"No," answered Maxom, "I do not think of taking to the woods. Our shelter must be here."

I looked at him incredulously.

"Here?" I echoed.

"Yes," he said, with a gloomy smile; "right here. The first thing to do, however, is to put this poor animal out of his misery. His misfortune will perhaps be our salvation. We must use him for food. Of course, had he been uninjured, we could have reached Fort Yukon before we got very hungry. But our progress will now be slow, and this coming storm will delay our departure from this spot. So, to make sure of provisions, here goes for an act I would prefer not to commit."

He placed the muzzle of his rifle to the reindeer's head and sent a bullet crashing through its brain.

"That is done," he said, as the animal stiffened out in the last paroxysm. "Now to work. We must roll snowballs. You know how, don't you?"

"Yes," I answered. "I used to make snow houses and snow forts when I was a boy."

"That is just what we are going to do now," he said; "make a snow house and fort."

He stooped down, and making a loose snowball, rolled it along the snow. The increasing warmth had made it moist and heavy, and it packed easily. I followed his example, and Hadleigh, eager to assist in anything that might conduce to his own safety, fell in readily, and we three were soon perspiring with the work of rolling enormous snowballs.

The spot upon which we had been left was as wild and desolate as any region in Alaska below the boundary of the forest region. In fact, we were near that boundary, for a few miles beyond us there was little to be seen of trees, the ground being that which is called "tundri," or treeless.

To the north of us was a thin, straggling belt of forlorn-looking trees, not worthy the name of forest. To the west, far in the distance, was the forest near where we had met the wolves. Between that and us was an unbroken expanse of snow.

A little to the east was a mountain, snow-clad, with here and there a clump of trees. Beyond that were other mountains, great peaks of ice and snow that were forbidding and sullen in their silent dreariness.

South of us there was nothing but snow—snow—as far as the eye could reach.

Our remaining reindeer moved slowly and easily about, sometimes in the deeper snow and sometimes in the tracks we had cleared as we rolled our steadily increasing snowballs before us; and he seemed to prefer these tracks, for it was easier for him to eat the mosses laid bare by our progressive movements.

For three hours we rolled snowballs, and had a most formidable array of them, standing in irregular rows, near the spot where our sled stood. They were awaiting the next command of Maxom, our engineer.

"There," he said, standing and looking at the round, white bowlders of snow, "that is enough. Now place them in a square, on these lines."

With the stock of his gun he marked a square, and together we worked to roll the balls into position.

"The large ones first," said Maxom. "The others must be lifted, and it will be no easy task."

In a short time we had made a complete square, leaving space enough for a man to walk through, as a door.

"Now for it," said Maxom. "We must raise it another tier."

It *was* a task, and by the time we got the second row done we were pretty tired. But we had the satisfaction of seeing our house now grown to the height of nearly six feet. In the second row we filled the space over the door, so that to enter, one must crawl through a hole not more than three feet high.

"Haw!" exclaimed Hadleigh. "That's good enough for a fort, but not a house, don't you know. The snow will fall inside and fill it, and we shall be no better off than before, don't you see."

"Why?" asked Maxom.

"Because it has no roof, don't you see," replied Hadleigh.

"We must put one on," said Maxom.

Our new house was about ten feet square, and, to tell the truth, the question of roof was one that puzzled me as well as Hadleigh.

"I confess I don't see how," I said.

"That is because you do not live in Alaska," said Maxom. "Your true Alaskan is never at a loss for a roof as long as the snow holds out. Or I might use the skin of that reindeer, but it would not be strong enough to bear the weight of a heavy fall of snow. The hide itself would, but there would be no way of fastening it to be secure. No, we must stick to the snow."

With his gun he knocked the inside of the snow hut smooth, and then began to put on a roof. As fast as Hadleigh and I rolled a snowball to him, he would cut it in halves by throwing the thongs of the harness around it and see-sawing on the thing until it fell apart. Then making each half as nearly square as he could, he put one upon another, in such a way as to build an arch, which, as it grew, covered our snow hut, and increased the height of the interior. He left a small hole in the top.

"That hole," he said, "is the smoke-hole or chimney. We build a fire under it, and the smoke rises and escapes, without inconveniencing the inhabitants of the hut. It also serves as a ventilator, the air inside becoming warm from the heat of our bodies, or a fire, if we have one, and rises to pass out through that hole, and is replaced by the colder air coming in through the entrance."

While he was speaking he was industriously pulling up the mosses which grew everywhere in abundance under the snow. I asked him what it was for, and he said for fuel, until we could go to the forest for wood—if that should prove to be necessary. Thereupon Hadleigh and I turned in and helped him and we soon had a pile of it inside the hut, where it would soon dry.

"The Kotch-a-Kutchins are the most intelligent among the natives of this portion of Alaska," Maxom continued, "and the best house builders, whether snow or wood. I learned my architecture from them."

"You learned it well," I said.

"Ah! this is but a makeshift—not a real house," he answered. "Some of these houses are more below ground than above. A great square place is dug out, sometimes, if the number of adults in the family demands it, divided into two or more rooms. Over all a hut like this is built, with the entrance a few feet off, leading through an underground tunnel to the main dwelling. You would be surprised to find how warm and comfortable *clean* people can be in one of these houses. Unfortunately, some of the natives are very negligent in matters hygienic, and the result is sometimes very unpleasant."

"Well, our shelter is ready," I said. "What about the reindeer? Are you going to build a snow stable, too?"

"No," said Maxom. "Our steed must take his chances. We have no more time to work. See, it is upon us, even now."

It was so. So absorbed had I been that I had not noticed the increasing darkness, nor the palpable presence of the storm. But as Maxom spoke the flakes began beating down upon me, and in a moment the air was so thick with them that we could not see clearly more than fifty feet.

"Hurry in with the sled," called Maxom, himself bending to seize it; "and don't forget your rifles."

We shoved the sled through the entrance of our house and crawled in after it.

"We are safe," said Maxom, with a sigh. "I hope to Heaven the girls are as safe. It be horrible if they are left to the severity of this storm."

"Perhaps Morrow and Bryant have made use of our expedient," I said, "and built a snow hut."

"I hope so, I hope so," said Maxom.

Hadleigh said nothing, but sat looking up at the hole in the roof, watching the few flakes that succeeded in falling through.

"Our dead deer," I said. "Ought we not to have brought it in?"

"No," said Maxom; "it is better in the snow. The air in here will soon be too warm for the meat to keep long."

Looking into the pile of moss we had gathered, and pulling it down and scattering it about, Maxom began selecting certain brown-looking stems, and these he laid to one side.

"What are you doing?" I asked.

"I am beginning to feel hungry," he replied, "and no doubt you are the same. It is time to think about a fire. We cannot have one at once, for this moss is wet. But I am picking out the old dead stems and leaves, and with these I expect to cook a piece of reindeer in an hour or two. You see there are some of them scarcely wet at all."

I helped him pick over the lot, and we soon had quite a pile of the dead stuff separated from the rest. This Maxom put in the centre of the hut, directly under the smoke-hole, and then felt in his pockets for a match.

"I am never without matches," he said, drawing a large metallic box from his pocket. "They have saved my life more than once. They are the only means by which I can get a fire in this land of snow. The natives succeed in doing it by old primitive methods, but I never could. Once or twice, when the sun was warm, I made a sun-glass out of ice, and got a piece of paper to burn. But had I been without the paper, I would have had no fire. No sun-glass will set this stuff afire."

He lighted a match and set fire to the moss. It sputtered a little and went out.

"Needs coaxing," said Maxom. "I'll try another."

Another match was put to the moss, and a thin little flame shot up through the pile. It lasted only a moment, when it went out. But in its stead there was a prodigious amount of smoke, which seemed with difficulty to crowd itself through the small opening in the roof.

"Not much of a success, after all," I said.

"All I expected this time," said Maxom. "There was but an inch or two that was actually dry. The rest will smolder on until the heat it generates warms and dries the pile, when suddenly you will see it burst into flame. Just let it alone and it will come all right. I am going out now to get some meat."

"Not in this storm?" I exclaimed.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"I cannot control the weather," he replied, "and we must eat. I have been in worse storms than this, but never under such miserably sad circumstances."

He crawled out of the door, through which I could see that the snow-fall was increasing, and we heard no more of him for several minutes.

I was much pleased when I saw his bear-skin cap coming through the door.

"I got it," he said, standing erect, and shaking the snow from him, "but it was work. The carcass is well covered by this time, so fast does the snow come down."

"It is a terrible storm," I said.

"Yes," he said musingly. "Our poor darlings! I wonder where they are?"

"Let us hope they are safe," I answered.

"Let us hope *we* will get out safely," said Hadleigh. A selfish interruption that received no reply from either of us.

Maxom squatted before the smoldering, smoking moss and gently fanned it.

"I am more hungry than ever," he said. "I wish this stuff would hurry up and dry."

After a time we were delighted to see a bright flame shoot up through the moss, and then the whole pile gradually ignited, until Maxom said it was ready for the venison.

He fixed it according to his own ideas, with a crane made of two rifles, and the meat hanging in the blaze, suspended by a raw deer-thong.

"We lose the juices," he said, "and may have a rather smoky-tasting meal, but hungry men are not dainty."

And, indeed, hunger is a great appetizer, for so hungry were we all that, crude as was the method of cooking, our meat tasted good, and we ate our fill. There was plenty left for the patiently waiting Yippo, who retired to a corner with the prize when it was thrown to him, and seemingly enjoyed it as much as we did.

Having finished our repast, we lighted our pipes—Hadleigh would not smoke a pipe, and he had no cigars or cigarettes—and sat on our bearskin coats, for the atmosphere inside our home was warm enough to divest ourselves of them, and talked long and earnestly about the girls, their probable fate should we fail to rescue them, the chances of our success when the storm abated, and the difficulty we would undoubtedly have in following the trail, which would be completely hidden by the freshly fallen snow.

After a few hours spent thus, we yielded to the drowsiness which overcame us, and lay down on our bearskins to sleep. The storm was raging with unabated fury outside, and Maxom, before stretching himself out, put a fresh supply of moss on the smoldering fire to dry for cooking the morning meal.

CHAPTER XVII.

How long I slept I do not know. We had our watches, but in the excitement of the night we forgot to look at them.

I was awakened from my sleep by several sharp barks from Yippo. I sprang to my feet, instinctively seizing my rifle. Maxom had risen when I did, and we stood together, rifle in hand, looking at each other in perplexity. Hadleigh was more tardy, but eventually he got on his feet, rifle in hand.

Yippo stood near the entrance of the hut, sniffing and growling fiercely.

"What is it?" I asked, seeing that Maxom looked worried.

"I don't know any more than you," he answered. "I heard Yip bark, and jumped

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just when you did. He sees, hears or smells something outside; and it is not a friend, either. There is but one way to find out, and that is to look."

"Be careful," I said, as he got down to look out of the hole.

"Down, Yippo! Down, boy!" he said.

He was about to put his head out of the hole, when he suddenly withdrew it, uttering an exclamation of surprise, and quickly bringing his rifle to bear outside, he fired.

I distinctly heard a howl immediately after.

"Wolves again?" I exclaimed.

"Yes," he answered, "wolves. We must keep them out of here."

"Can they tear down the walls of the hut?" I asked, apprehensively.

"No, they won't try. But keep your rifle ready—you, too, Hadleigh—for unless we are wide awake, they will be in on us."

"But the storm!" I said. "How came they to venture forth in it?"

"They didn't," came the reply. "The storm is over, and these wolves are famishing. Our fight is going to be a long one and it will continue till the last wolf is killed."

At that instant a savage snout was thrust in through the door.

"Take him!" said Maxom.

Quick as thought I fired. I broke the beast's jaw, but all the more enraged, he came on. A ball from Maxom's rifle laid him dead, even inside the hut.

"A warning to the others," he said, taking the carcass by the neck and slinging it through the door.

"The reindeer!" I exclaimed, suddenly thinking of our noble steed, and startled at the fear of what might happen to him.

"Not ours any longer," said Maxom. "He is either miles away from here or half devoured. Let us hope the former is the case."

"Yes, indeed," I replied. "I should be sorry to have the poor animal fall a victim to these pirates of the ice. Look out there—there's another!"

Yippo sprang forward and seized the hungry intruder by the nose. Then ensued a bloodthirsty and savage battle, such as the Siberian and English bulldog alone of all domestic animals are capable of sustaining.

The wolf was lean and gaunt, and horrid in his hungry rage. The Siberian was heavy, with jaws that seemed able to crush anything, and there was no doubting his determination and savage persistency when once roused.

It was impossible for any of us to fire. To begin with, it was night—though night in that portion of the world does not mean absolute darkness. Then, our hut was but poorly lighted by the door and smoke-hole. And finally, even had it been light, the two combatants were so mixed up—so constantly leaping, twisting and rolling about, that it was impossible to see wolf long enough to fire without running a serious risk of shooting dog.

"Look out!" called Maxom, suddenly, and his rifle cracked.

We had been so interested in the fight that we had neglected the door. Another intruder had appeared, but Maxom's quick eye and certain aim had cut his career off short.

Yippo, being the heavier and better fed of the two antagonists, was now evidently wearing the wolf out. The movements of both were slower. Great drops of blood were thrown about, but whether of the dog or wolf we could not tell.

By a tremendous effort, in which the muscles of the hind quarters seemed to play a most important point, Yippo squirmed himself into an upright position, and, with his great jaws on the wolf's neck, he held his adversary down and growled savagely.

"Now I'll help you, Yip, old fellow," said Maxom, calmly, and he stooped down and drew his hunting-knife across the wolf's throat. Then, taking the carcass by the hind legs, he threw it out of the hut.

In all this Hadleigh had done nothing. He stood shivering with fear, hanging on to his rifle with both hands, crying, "Oh! Oh! What shall I do?" to which question neither Maxom nor myself made answer.

Outside the door of our hut we could hear the most frightful and appalling snarls and howls, as if the famished brutes were fighting among themselves—perhaps quarreling as they devoured the bodies of their dead companions.

But though the snarling outside continued, no more wolves came into the hut. After waiting, steadfastly watching the entrance for several minutes, Maxom turned, and, drawing his knife from his belt, said:

"You watch the hole."

"What are *you* going to do?" I asked, with my rifle ready and my eyes riveted on the entrance.

"I am going to make a porthole through which to get a shot at these brutes," he replied.

Then, as if struck with a sudden thought, he turned to Hadleigh, and said:

"Here! You can do that, too! You have been howling 'what shall I do?' long enough! Let Wetmore watch the door. His eye is quick, his aim sure. You take your knife and dig a hole through the wall—not too large—just large enough to put your rifle through and sight it."

Recovering himself from the condition of fear to which he had been reduced, Hadleigh seized his knife and attacked the snow wall.

I stood like a statue, watching the entrance.

"The brutes have taken warning," I said, "and will not venture in."

"We'll get them, nevertheless," replied Maxom, resolutely, as he hacked away with his knife.

"Ah!" he ejaculated, finally. "I see them."

I ventured to turn my head long enough to see what he had done. A hole, perhaps two inches and a half in diameter, had been drilled through the wall of the hut. The inner end of the porthole, of course, was larger, as it was necessary to make room for his hand in driving the knife through the outer wall. This expansion inside served also to enable him to aim his rifle to the right or left, giving ample room for it to swing to a limit of not less than ninety degrees.

"Have you cut through yet, Hadleigh?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Hadleigh. "This is my last stroke, don't you know."

"Can you see any wolves from your window?"

"Haw! a horrid lot of them, don't you know."

"So do I. Here, Wetmore, take a look! I will guard the entrance."

I stepped to the hole he had cut and looked through it.

At least twenty of the gaunt, starving beasts were out there, snarling and fighting over some object that was hidden from us by their writhing bodies.

"Horrible!" I said. "Shall I give them a shot?"

"Yes; a dozen if you like."

"Haw! So will I," said Hadleigh. "I'll show the scoundrels who I am."

I carefully poked my rifle through the little window, and taking a careful aim, I shot one of the brutes dead.

Hadleigh, at the same moment, fired, and I heard him chuckling, so concluded he had been successful.

Again I fired, and again I brought down a wolf.

Still again I let my rifle bark its venom, and one of the beasts fell to snapping at its hind legs.

"There," I said. "You had better take a hand, now. All I can do is to wound them."

I took up my position near the entrance, and held my rifle ready for instantaneous use.

I soon heard Maxom's rifle, and though he said nothing, I felt that with every crack of the Bear-Hunter's rifle a wolf fell dead.

I even counted the shots, scoring one less wolf in my mind for every bullet fired.

I counted eighteen shots.

"Ah!" I said. "They must be all gone now. There were not more than eighteen, as near as I could judge, when I left. You have fired eighteen shots. I have scored a dead wolf for every shot."

Maxom gave a short laugh.

"You estimate correctly," he said. "If I have fired eighteen times, there were eighteen wolves, for I have failed but once to drop one, and there is one left."

"He is gone now," I said.

Maxom's rifle cracked again.

"He is gone," he said, calmly.

"How is it with you, Hadleigh?" I asked. "Can you see any more from your window?"

"One, don't you know. I'll do him this time, sure," replied Hadleigh, who fired immediately after speaking.

"Hang it, I only wounded him, you know," he said ruefully.

Maxom stepped to the window near Hadleigh, and putting the muzzle of his rifle out through it, fired.

"That settles *him*," he said. "Now we can go out safely."

Without a moment's hesitation Maxom crawled through the door, and I followed him.

"Are there no wolves out there?" called Hadleigh from within the hut.

"Yes," replied Maxom, in a tone of disgust. "Plenty of them."

"Oh, heavens! Kill them!"

"They are all dead now," answered Maxom.

And Hadleigh bravely came crawling out of the hut.

I looked at my watch when we got outside, and found that it was two o'clock in the morning. Yet it was light enough for me, without the aid of artificial light, to plainly see the dial of my watch. We disagreed as to how long the combat had lasted. Maxom was inclined to think it could have been but half an hour. I thought it must have been certainly an hour, while Hadleigh's befuddled brain could conceive of no less a duration of warfare than three hours.

The scene was weird and gruesome.

All around lay the gaunt bodies of wolves. The snow for many feet around the hut was tramped down and blood-stained.

"This is the worst of all," said Maxom.

I turned and looked in the direction he indicated. It was the spot where the wolves had been fighting, as I saw them through Maxom's window. There, surrounded by the bodies of dead wolves, were the bones of our dead reindeer.

"Our meat!" I said.

"Our meat is gone," said Maxom, soberly, "and our live reindeer is gone as well. Fortunately he was not eaten, for there is no sign of his skeleton here. He must have fled, and being free, of course the wolves could not keep his tremendous pace. This may prove really fortunate for us as well as for the reindeer. He may come back, or in our travels we may come across him again."

"But what are we going to eat?" asked Hadleigh. "Wolves?"

Maxom kicked one of the bony carcasses.

"I have never eaten a wolf," he said, "and do not fancy there would be much on their gaunt frames. The thought of making food of the creatures is disgusting. I would prefer to put my stomach to a little inconvenience and hunt round for a wild goose or two before I undertook to eat one of these."

"But *are* there any wild geese or any other game around here?" I asked. "It is better to look the question squarely in the face. Are we not in danger of starvation?"

Maxom shook his head.

"I don't know. There are parts of Alaska where but little game of any kind is found. This region is slightly familiar to me, though I have never before been so far from the river. This *may* be one of the barren spots. But we cannot tell to-night. Let us finish our rest, which was so rudely interrupted, and in the morning we can judge what is best to be done."

With this he got down and crawled again into the hut, and we after him.

In a few minutes—so does the mind become accustomed to dangers and excitements—Maxom and I were asleep, as though nothing had disturbed us. Hadleigh told us in the morning that he had not slept a wink, and his haggard look left us no room for doubting his word.

In the morning we stood outside the hut, ruefully looking at the bones of the reindeer.

"That should have been our breakfast," said Maxom. "But as it has been snatched away from us, I am going to see what I can do to supply the deficiency."

"Where are you going?" I asked.

"There," he said, pointing eastward. "Do you see that mountain, with its clumps of trees and icy fortresses still above them? There ought to be something to eat in there. Geese, sometimes in taking their southerly flight, which they do here as well as in the States, though it is now rather late, go up on high mountains to look around them. I may find some late stragglers there. Or, I may run across a bear. The place does not look unlikely."

"Oh, a bear!" ejaculated Hadleigh. "I wouldn't like to meet a bear."

"Well, I would," said Maxom. "Just about this minute I can't think of anything in the animal line, unless it is a fleet pair of reindeer, that I would prefer to a bear. A bear steak, well cooked, is a fine thing, in Alaska or out of it. I'll take Yip with me. He can render good service if I meet anything."

"Haw! I think I'll go with you, don't you know," said Hadleigh.

"You can't stand the fatigue. That's a severe task, to walk to that mountain in this snow," said Maxom.

"Oh, but I can, don't you see!" persisted Hadleigh. "I'd rather be with you, don't you know, because you *know* the country."

"Well, if it's any comfort to you, come along," said Maxom, shouldering his rifle and striding away.

"As to me?" I said. "The sled must be guarded—I don't suppose there is the remotest possibility of its being stolen, nor any possible chance of its ever being of use to us again. What do you say, Maxom?"

"It is much as you suggest," replied Maxom.

"It might lie here for years and no human eye see it. And we might guard it jealously, and never have any further use for it. But there is always the *possibility*. A wandering band of Rats or Kowaks might come this way, and pick it up. And, we might get our reindeer back, and without our sled, he would be of no use to us."

"Again, in reply to your question about yourself, I think some one ought to remain here. One man can keep the place. Roll a big ball and stop up the hole while you are alone. We may need this hut for a day or two. It depends on our success on the mountain. Tahnag might come this way—the faithful fellow will not fail to look for us, and one of us should be here to acquaint him with the facts of our experience. Every way you look at it, it seems better for one at least to remain here."

"I agree with you," I replied, "and since Hadleigh has chosen to accompany you, I will remain alone. I don't know but what I am glad he so elected, for his assistance in defense is not the most valuable."

"I wasn't brought up to the life of a soldier," retorted Hadleigh.

"Come on," said Maxom, swinging off ahead, and Yippo bounded along beside him

Hadleigh started off in his wake, and I stood long gazing after them, noting the difference between them. One, well-built, strong and brave as a lion, resolute, of indomitable will; the other, a weakling.

When I found myself alone, I sat down on a snowball, first covering it with my bearskin coat, and mused awhile on the probabilities of our fate and that of the girls. Finding myself growing moody under the influence of the silence, I sprang to my feet, and seizing my knife attacked the body of the wolf nearest me.

Wolfskin, I knew, was about as miserable a thing in the way of fur that could be had. But there was no telling what would befall us, or how long we would be wandering about. We might at any time need clothing, and these wolfskins would be just the things for the purpose. So I skinned one, and then another, fastening the pelts down over the snow to let them dry without shrinking or curling up.

So busy did I keep myself that I thought of nothing except the work before me. And when I had finished the last one, and looked at my watch, I was surprised to find that it was two o'clock. Maxom had been gone six hours. I looked for the hunters in vain. They had long ago vanished from my sight.

I realized that I was very hungry. As yet, I had eaten nothing that day. Nor, save the meat of the wolves, was there anything to eat. I revolted at the idea of eating the wolves.

I took up a handful of clean snow and ate it. It had a slightly reviving effect. I took another, and another, and for a time staved off the pangs of hunger.

Hours passed.

Night was coming on, and yet the hunters did not return.

If they did not, my hunger did, and I felt sick and faint from my long abstinence.

At last it grew almost unbearable. Violent pains racked me. My body seemed full of various kinds of torture. I grew dizzy.

Would I starve! No, I would eat wolf. Ugh! I could not! I could not! The hateful thing would nauseate me. It would not satisfy my hunger.

It seemed that I must die.

No! A feeble ray of hope came to me. The reindeer lived on the lichens that grew under the snow. Why not I? It *was* a feeble hope, it is true. It seemed like eating grass. But even grass was more inviting than wolf meat. Faugh! I could *not* eat it. I would eat lichens. They would sustain me through the night.

I went some distance from the hut, where I knew the mosses had not been touched, and scooped a hole down into the snow until I found what I wanted.

Snow and lichens formed my meal. Lichens and snow! Truly, not a grand repast, but far better than the disgusting wolf-meat. It at least relieved the intense suffering for a time. Feeling much better, I went into the hut and lay down.

"If I can sleep till morning," I said to myself, "it will be all right. Maxom will come with food, and my hunger will be over."

I fell asleep as I desired. I slept all night, as I had wished. When I awoke it was long past the ordinary breakfast hour. I crawled out of the hut; I looked this way and that. No Maxom! No Hadleigh! Not a human being in sight!

Lichens and snow for breakfast. Snow and lichens, but no wolf-meat.

Stay! There!—behind that hummock!—coming toward me! Is that Hadleigh? No! Yes! It cannot be—he staggers! It *is!* He is ill! But where is Maxom? The hound?"

In a few minutes he was before me. My soul turned sick at the haggard look on his face.

"Where is Maxom?" I roared.

With a ghastly smile he pointed toward the mountain.

"Dead!" he gasped, and fell in a dead faint on the blood-red snow!

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT—NO. 1.]

◆

FIVE O'CLOCK TEA.

BY J. J. D.

What shall we find when the play is done
  At the sign of the Pekoe Tree!
A cup and a welcome for every one,
  And a corner for you and me.
A glimpse of æsthetic daintiness,
An air of Bohemian ease, no less,
  And a corner for you and me!
Where one may sip and dream if he will,
And fancy the world is standing still,
  At the sign of the Pekoe Tree?

Fair Phyllis as well, polite, alert,
  We shall find at the Pekoe Tree;
Not over demure, nor yet too pert,
  As she waits upon you and me.
Prettily gowned, and daintily neat
With deft white hands and a smile discreet,
  As she waits upon you and me.
So, please, no excuse. Fagged out or "fit."
Or merry, or dull, what matters it—
  We can meet at the Pekoe Tree!

◆

STREET-CAR MAIL SERVICE.

There are few things more interesting to the average citizen than prompt, frequent and certain mail service. Men often refuse to live in suburban places because their business necessities involve constant dependence on the mails.

The two great needs of suburban locanties are rapid transit and frequent mail deliveries. The trolley is helping to supply the first, and with proper management may do much toward meeting the second proposition. There is no reason why suburban trolleys should not carry mails in the same way as do the cable cars in the cities. The people must have the mails, and are willing to pay for them, willing, probably, to pay more than for any privilege they enjoy. To be able inside of thirty minutes to reach a comfortable out-of-town residence, and know that letters addressed there will be promptly delivered, will do more to build up the outskirts of large cities than anything else that can be devised. When to this is added the telephone, at rates that make it possible for others than millionaires to use it, and the telegraph, which is almost as important, the enormous aggregation of humanity as we see it now in cities will begin to scatter, the mass will gradually disintegrate, and we will have better conditions, better bred children, better health, better education and better morals.

MYSTERIOUS MR. HOWARD.*

BY JOHN R. MUSICK.

A Thrilling Story of Missouri Border Lawlessness and Justice.

[“MYSTERIOUS MR. HOWARD” was commenced in No. 40. Back numbers of the *Ledger*, containing the opening chapters of this story, can be obtained of all Newsdealers. *Even if the Newsdealer is out of back numbers, he will order them for you, if you request him to do so.*]

CHAPTER XXXI—*(Continued)*.

ARTHUR TELLS ALL.

“GENERAL HAWLEY,” Arthur whispered in a voice hoarse with earnestness, “you have been a father to me, and I would die for you.” The banker opened his eyes in astonishment. “Don’t look so surprised. I want to tell you something, but not here. It must be where no eye can see us and no ear save yours hear. Now be perfectly cool. Go home and say not a word about it to a living soul, but send a messenger for me to come to your house on a matter of business about the bank, so there can be no suspicion. If I should go of my own accord, suspicion would be roused, for both you and I are watched.”

“Why, George! What does this mean?”

“That’s what I want to tell you, but I can’t tell you here. Do as I say, and don’t believe me suddenly gone mad, for I am as sane as you.”

“Well, as Hamlet’s mother said, ‘if this is madness, there is method in it.’”

“I will prove to you that there is method in it, but we must not even be seen walking together. Go home, and as soon as you have had your tea send for me. I will be at my room in the hotel, and will come at once. You must give me an audience alone. For the love of Heaven, your life and family, be calm and say not a word to any one of this.”

General Hawley was a man of much nerve and coolness, but the manner of the bookkeeper almost upset him. As he walked homeward with a corrugated brow, he kept thinking:

“Can the young fellow have lost his senses? Is it possible he has suddenly gone mad? No, by Jove, he doesn’t look as if he was, yet he talks as though some terrible conspiracy was about to ruin the country.”

Arthur tried to be cool and appear unconcerned. He had commenced the work, and called into use all his wonderful self-command. He went to supper, but did not linger long at the table. He had scarcely reached his room when a messenger from the Hawley mansion came with a note summoning him to the banker’s presence at once. He was leaving the hotel when he met Meeker.

“Hello, my friend! Going for a stroll?” said Meeker. “That suits me; we will go together.” Then he whispered: “The chief wants to see you to-night.”

“I can’t go.”

“Why?”

For answer he gave him the note. Meeker read it, and a frown came over his face.

“What can the old cuss want with you?”

“The note does not say, and I have no means of knowing. Nevertheless, I must obey it, or I shall incur his anger, perhaps suspicion, and be discharged. It might ruin all to refuse to obey this summons, so explain matters and excuse me to the chief.”

They had strolled into an almost deserted street, and were speaking in whispers.

“Yes, we will have to let you off to-night; but, George, has he any suspicion that something is wrong with the books?”

“No.”

“He never mentions it?”

“Never.”

“If he should come to suspect me, the jig would be up.”

“I know he has the utmost confidence in you. But let me hasten to him and allay any suspicion he may have, if he has any.”

He got away from Meeker and walked rapidly to the mansion. He did not meet Grace this time. She usually managed to meet him in the hall, but on this occasion he did not see her. The old banker was alone in his study, and his face wore a perplexed look.

“Well, George, my boy, you have puzzled me. I don’t know whether you have suddenly gone mad or discovered some great conspiracy that is about to upset the Government.”

“It’s a conspiracy, General Hawley,” said Arthur, coolly. “Though it does not threaten the nation, it does threaten you.”

“What is it?”

“Are we quite alone?”

“Yes.”

“No one can eavesdrop us?”

“No.”

“General Hawley, are your nerves strong? Can you listen to a story far more thrilling than any blood-and-thunder novel?”

“Yes, go on.”

“I am going to commence by giving you a history of a part of my life, for it concerns you, so don’t interrupt me.”

He proceeded to briefly narrate his early life, and how he was placed in the store of Mark Hunt to earn a living; of the false accusation; his hopeless tramping and starving in search of work, and finally meeting the stranger, Jackson, at Kansas City, who persuaded him to join the banditti. The banker, despite his promises, could not refrain from frequent interjections of wonder. When he told of the train robbery, and his only larceny, the letter—giving it to the banker to read, in proof of what he said—the General’s amazement increased. Then he told how he had saved his daughter from the villain’s knife, and produced the handkerchief she had given him, stained with her blood. The General grasped his hand, and cried:

“Great Heaven! Was it you who saved my child?”

“Silence, General Hawley! The wonder is coming.”

He then told him that Meeker, short in his accounts, and, angry because Grace had declined his hand, had, through a friend of the bandit chief, laid a plan to rob the bank, and that the former bookkeeper had been sent away, and he given the place, in order to help the nefarious scheme. After having made a “clean breast” of everything, and noted the increasing amazement and interest of the banker, he concluded with:

“Now, General Hawley, this revelation may seem unreal, but I swear that every word of it is true. I do not know how I can make you believe me. A bandit, sent to rob and perhaps murder you, can hardly be expected to be more honest or truthful than one whom you have always believed to be honorable and trustworthy; but I have resolved, with the help of God, to do my duty and take the consequences. My life is forfeited, whatever the consequences may be. Even if the Missouri banditti are thwarted, slain or captured, they have friends who will avenge them. You can hardly realize what a power they are, and that they have friends in high places who shelter and protect them, and others who will avenge them.”

“They sha’n’t harm a hair of your head!” cried the impetuous old banker. “When a young fellow has determined to do the right, with all the temptations that are thrown around him, he is not going to be touched by these cowardly robbers. But this thing amazes, shocks me. Meeker a rascal! Wife and Grace always said he was. I thought it was only their prejudice against him.”

“Their knowledge of human nature has proven keener than yours. Perhaps you form your judgment of the man from outward appearances, while they read the heart.”

“What are we to do?” asked the General, after taking a few turns across the room.

“We must frustrate the robbers.”

“But how?”

“Whom can you trust with this secret?”

“I don’t know. Yes—there is Colonel Hale, the lawyer. He is my legal adviser.”

“You might consult with him, if you are quite sure that he will keep it. But I would advise you to go to Chicago and bring some of the keenest detectives in that city to help plan for the capture of the band.”

“I can’t go; the bank may be robbed meanwhile.”

“No; nothing will be done until the State funds arrive. You have plenty of time.”

“Yes, yes; but I am all flustered. It seems hard to believe Meeker that kind of a man.”

“Bring your detectives and set them to shadowing Meeker and myself, and you will find it true. I will know soon when the robbery is to be committed. I will meet the chief, learn his plan, and you can have your officers stationed about the bank to kill or arrest the robbers. If no attempt is made to rob the bank; if Meeker should be innocent and I insane or trying to malign him, he need never know that you suspected him.”

General Hawley decided to take Arthur’s advice and prepare to defend his bank.

“Now, my boy,” said the banker, who had grown more cool and collected, “let me take that letter from Cravensford and lock it in my private safe. When this is all over it may prove a mascot for you.”

“It will make but little difference to me what it proves,” said Arthur, handing him the letter. “The least I can hope for is a life sentence in the penitentiary. I once had ambitious dreams, but all that is over now.”

“Don’t despair, my boy. While there is life there is hope.”

“I have counted everything,” Arthur answered. “I know it is death anyway, and I have resolved to die for the right. It would be pleasant to die for you, and—and—”

“Who?”

“Your daughter!” An expression of alarm and pain swept over the banker’s face; he gasped for breath and half started from his seat, and Arthur added: “Do not alarm yourself, General. She shall never know how I feel in this matter. I understand my position, and shall not leave my proper place.”

He left the house, and the General buried his face in his hands and gave utterance to a groan.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE LAST CONSULTATION.

Despite all his efforts to be calm, Arthur found himself trembling next morning when he went to his desk. Meeker was in the bank almost as soon as himself. General Hawley did not come until an hour or two later, and the bookkeeper watched him with great anxiety. He tried hard to read his thoughts, but the General was outwardly calm. Arthur would not have suspected that he knew anything of the conspiracy, if he had not told him the night before. One thing was marked on the part of the banker, and that was his treatment of Meeker. He kept aloof from him, and spent most of his time in his private office.

It was late in the day when Arthur heard the cashier and president talking. A few moments later the General took his departure, and Meeker came to Arthur’s side, and in a low tone said:

“What’s got into the old man? He’s going to Chicago.”

“I can’t say. Does he often go to Chicago?”

“Not of late years.”

“Did he give no reason for going?”

“Some private business of his own.”

Meeker seemed very much put out, and gave vent to an expression very much like an oath, as he turned away. Arthur called him back, and asked:

“Did you see the chief last night?”

“Yes.”

“What did you learn of him?”

“He was very angry at you.”

“Why?”

“For failing to meet him. He swore he would teach you to obey orders.”

“But if I had gone as he directed, I would have spoiled everything. General Hawley would have had his suspicions aroused, or become angry at my disobedience, and I would have been discharged. Didn’t you explain this to the chief?”

“Yes, but it did not satisfy him. He is not pleased with the way you have been acting.”

“I am sorry. I was guided by my best judgment and discretion.”

Meeker went away with a frown on his face. That Meeker was jealous and suspicious of him, Arthur did not doubt, and during the day the cashier’s sullenness caused him much uneasiness. He feared that he was putting his recent visit to the General and the latter’s sudden journey to Chicago together, and was drawing a conclusion that might thwart his designs. After closing, Arthur went to his room at the hotel. He had not been alone a great while when he was startled by a tap at his door. He rose and opened it, and admitted Meeker.

“Are you alone?” he asked.

“Yes, I am always alone when not at the bank.”

“He has gone.”

“The General?”

“Yes, he has gone to Chicago, but what the deuce he went for puzzles me.”

“Did he make no explanation?”

“Said something about a real-estate deal.”

“When did he say he would be back?” asked Arthur, who, now that he had the lead in asking questions, determined to hold that position.

“In two or three days.”

“Then he will come back before the State funds arrive?”

“Yes.”

“When will the chief come again?”

“In a few days; Bob will let me know.”

“I want to see him then.”

“You had better see him and try to set matters aright. There is another thing I want you to bear in mind, and that is to keep away from the Hawley mansion.”

“I will not go unless on urgent business, or sent for.”

“You will not be sent for.”

They then discussed the State funds, and how the banditti would carry away the money.

“I hope the State Treasurer will not send much silver,” said the cashier. “Silver is bulky and heavy. Paper is much better.”

“Yes, but they will manage to lug it away.”

“How do they carry it?”

“In bags, slung across their horses,” answered Arthur.

“Did you ever assist to rob a bank?” asked the cashier, nervously.

“No, but I have heard them explain how it was done.”

“How long have you been with them?” asked the cashier.

“It will soon be four months.”

“And do you propose to quit?”

“I have not fully made up my mind. Some seem to think that we will make so much out of this affair that we can all retire from business; but I have given the matter no thought yet.”

“I wish the thing was over,” said Meeker, in a hoarse whisper, while he fidgeted uneasily in his chair. “I am getting deucedly nervous.”

“Why should you be nervous? You are not expected to have anything to do with the robbery.”

“No, but some wretched blunder, slip or mishap might make it all miscarry, and then I would be in a fix.”

“No worse than I,” answered Arthur, coolly, “and yet I am not growing nervous. In our position one takes his life in his hand, and must be prepared for anything.”

“But you don’t occupy my position in society. The fall, the disgrace, is something.”

“Prison bars, a bullet or rope levels all ranks of society, Mr. Meeker. But let us not look on the dark side of the picture.”

“You are right. It is unwise and foolish to do so, and we shall not. I am going, now, and will try to be more cheerful in the future.”

Three days later General Hawley returned, and was in the bank as if nothing had happened. The reader will remember that Col. John W. Hale’s office was over the bank, and Colonel Hale was the legal adviser of the banker. He frequently went to his office to consult with him on legal points in his business, and while he was in the private office of Colonel Hale, discussing the proposed robbery, he excited no suspicion from anyone. Even Arthur, who lived in constant expectancy, did not know that four of Chicago’s keenist detectives were in the city. Those plain, business-looking men, who were seen so often going to and coming from Colonel Hale’s office, were supposed to be clients. When the whole plan had been laid out to Colonel Hale by the General, and he learned that one of the band had become penitent, and had determined to betray them, he thought that perhaps he would be able to gain some evidence from him that would aid in the defense of Horace Rathburne, for he did not doubt that this was the same band that robbed the Standish Bank. But he resolved to say nothing about it to him until the banditti had been captured.

Arthur hoped the banker had done something to prevent the robbery, but day after day went by, and the time for the arrival of the State funds drew frightfully near, and he heard nothing nor saw a sign of defense. Sometimes in his desperation he was on the eve of running away and leaving the banker and his enemies to fight their own battles, especially as the General seemed not to heed his warning. But at such moments the great dark, soulful eyes of Grace seemed gazing on him in sad reproval, and he determined, come what might, he would remain and defend the bank alone and single-handed.

It was the Tuesday before the State funds were to arrive on Thursday, and he was just closing up his books for the day, when Meeker whispered:

“Wait until the others are gone!”

“You have something to say?”

“Yes.”

The bookkeeper opened the ledger again and began going over its pages, as if something had been neglected. General Hawley suddenly came into the bank on pretense of having forgotten something in his private office. He paused a moment at Arthur’s desk, as if to speak with him, and showed him a card on which was writttn:

“*All is well; report as soon as there are any new developments.*”

Arthur read, nodded, and the General, crushing the card in his hand, entered his private office and destroyed it. Arthur did not look up from his ledger, but resolved to have a talk with the General before the dawn of another day. General Hawley was in his private office but a moment, and then passing through the bank, went out on the street. As soon as all had gone from the building, the cashier came to the side of the bookkeeper and said: “Now that they are all gone, I want to tell you that there is to be a consultation to-night.”

“At the old mill?”

“No. We don’t dare meet there any more. It might attract attention. I will come for you.”

“What time will you call?”

“Between nine and ten o’clock to-night.”

“I will be in my room.”

Arthur then closed his ledger, locked his desk, and went to the hotel. After supper he went to his room to wait for the cashier. It still lacked three-quarters of an hour to the time for Meeker to come, when there came a tap at his door, and opening it, he saw a new arrival at the hotel, who occupied the room opposite him.

“Will you please give me a match?” he asked. “I have none to light my gas.”

“Certainly.” Turning to the low mantel, he took some matches from a little ornamented match-safe and handed them to the man, who stood in his door. He took the matches, and thrusting them in his pocket, still remained in the doorway, as if anxious to form an acquaintance.

“Do you live in Starkeville?” he asked.

“Yes,” Arthur answered. The town was as much his home as any place.

“I am a stranger here, but I like the town. Are you in business?”

“I am the bookkeeper of the Hawley Bank.”

“An excellent position. You are lucky to have it. If you had to travel as we poor fellows do, and depended on commissions on sales, you would learn what it is to hustle.”

“You are a commercial traveller?”

“Yes.”

“How long since you came?”

“Three days. I’m not through yet, and I shall probably be here two or three days more. My room is right across the hall from yours; come in and get acquainted.”

Arthur thanked him for the invitation, and the stranger retired, closing the door after him. In a short time Mr. Meeker came, and said:

“Are you ready?”

“How far have we to go?”

“Some distance.”

“I am ready.”

He donned his hat and followed Meeker down the stairs to the street. He had hardly disappeared from the hall, when the door opposite opened, and the gentleman who had borrowed the matches, who gave his name as Nicholas Burton, emerged, dressed for a walk, and skipped down the stairway after them.

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT—NO. 1.]

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PAUL MORTON.[*]

A Tale of the Great Panic of 1857.

BY P. HAMILTON MYERS.

["PAUL MORTON" was commenced in No. 34. Back numbers of the *Ledger*, containing the opening chapters of this story, can be obtained of all Newsdealers. *Even if the Newsdealer is out of back numbers, he will order them for you, if you request him to do so.*]

["Paul Morton" is a story of the great panic which swept over this country in 1857, and engulfed nearly every large banking and commercial house in its wake. It is particularly interesting at this time, when the country is recovering from the severe trials of the past year or two. The story is a reflex of the manners and mode of life of the New York of that period, and shows, by comparison, how we have advanced in all the conveniences and circumstances which render life in this country so different from what it was thirty-five years ago. The romantic interest of the story is absorbing, and will be found entertaining to both old and young readers of the *Ledger*.]

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

PAUL was now too happy to think of risking his life, which he had before held so cheaply, by a return to the mines. He resolved to retain what interest he could in the Golden Valley, and to invest a part of his means in the expedition which was to return to it in the spring; but for himself, he would not go.

He knew that, by reason of the general notoriety which had pertained to Clara's contemplated marriage and its abandonment, she desired to avoid any present publicity of their engagement, and as to the wedding itself, she named a day so very distant for it, and pleaded so eloquently and earnestly for the delay, that Paul was obliged to set his wits at work for a device by which to remove her scruples.

He easily found it in a plan for which an abundance of other reasons existed. He would return home; a private ceremony should precede their departure, and he would bear his beautiful bride away from the shores of the Pacific before "half the world" of San Francisco should know that she was married, or even affianced.

To this proposal he did not find it difficult to win either her consent or that of her parents, who, in the now perfect happiness and health of their daughter, had found the most ample cause for rejoicing in the change of her position.

Mr. Grey, who continued on the most intimate terms with the Hoffman family and with Paul, and from whom their full confidence was not withheld, fully approved this course, and promised to take charge of Paul's business interests in the ensuing spring. Everything was accordingly arranged for this plan.

Tim resolved to remain and return to the mines, and the Mendles, whom Paul had made partners in the new firm by transferring to them a small portion of his own stock, gladly decided on the same course.

Thus Morton became sure of three stanch friends in the company, who would look faithfully after his rights while protecting their own.

On the day of the sailing of the next steamer for Panama, a few carriages might have been seen standing in front of Mr. Hoffman's house, while within the marriage ceremony was performed in the presence of none but the most intimate friends of the family.

Mingled smiles and tears marked the event, for the hasty congratulations were followed by more hasty adieux, and Paul and his radiant yet weeping bride were borne rapidly away.

A few friends of Morton, whom, at the last moment, he had bidden farewell and had informed of his intended wedding and flight, assembled at the vessel to offer their congratulations to the bride and groom.

But ere the evening papers had blazoned the intelligence to the wondering public the happy couple were beyond even telescopic view of the city of the Golden Gate.

Over that homeward journey, crowned by such joy, the hurrying pen can scarcely glide too fleetly to indicate the rapid flight of its blissful hours.

It formed no small part of Paul's delight, as he looked forward to a reunion with his family, that he should utterly surprise them by his arrival, and still more so by his marriage.

That both would be joyous surprises he very well knew, but what reminiscences they entertained of his beloved Clara, of course he could not tell.

Whatever they might be, he was sure they had only to see and know her to love her as a daughter and a sister.

Her own solicitude on this subject was not slight, until it was discovered by Paul, and was dispelled by his sanguine and hearty assurances.

They were not too sanguine nor too earnest for the reality, as was proven ere many days had elapsed.

The astonishment and delight produced by the unannounced arrival of Paul and Clara at his father's house, as they were beyond utterance, so do they surpass description.

Mrs. Morton clasped them alternately in her arms again and again, clinging to her son with an excess of affection to which no language could give expression, while with streaming and uplifted eyes she thanked God for his boundless mercies.

The father was scarcely less overcome with joy, while Anna, in her more quiet but scarcely less expressive way, manifested an equal happiness.

It took long to relate, even in outline, the strange events which had marked Paul's career that had terminated in so happy a *dénouement*, and it was not until another day that anything like detail was even attempted.

While Anna listened to her brother, and gazed alternately upon him and his happy bride, a tear stole into her eye and the lightest of sighs escaped her lips. But, all unconscious though she doubtless was herself of these flitting signs of sadness, they did not escape the observation of Paul, who instinctively guessed the emotions which prompted them.

"And you, dear Anna," he said—"how fares it with you and Harry? You have said that he is well; but the wedding—when is that to be?"

Anna smiled faintly as she replied that she did not know.

"How is it, mother? When is Anna to be married?"

"Ah! I don't know, my son. Eldon is not doing as well as he expected. He finds it difficult to support himself, I believe, and pay the interest on our loan, which he persists in doing very punctually."

"That is right, and it is like him, too. But, Anna, if neither mother nor you know when the wedding is to be, I think I can tell you."

"You can tell us! You must have become a soothsayer, then, during your absence; for I assure you we do not know, and Harry thinks the time must be far distant."

"I can tell you," repeated Paul.

"Pray do, then, Paul. It will be quite interesting to know," replied Anna, laughing. "Will it be in the year 1860, or farther on?"

"No, Anna. It will be in this present year, and in this present month, and I will endow the bride."

Paul spoke so emphatically that Anna saw he was in earnest, and flinging her arms around his neck, she gave way, for a moment only, to tears and sobs.

Paul now for the first time alluded to his wealth, of which, together with his still greater expectations, he gave his friends a full account; and although their happiness was so great before, this intelligence added incalculably to it by giving promise of its perpetuity.

Many were the calculations hastily made as to the future; and Paul, whose thoughts were still for others rather than himself, at once suggested that his fathor must travel—for the benefit of his health.

He had never been abroad himself, but now he thought of it, he would like to travel also, and he was very sure that Clara would be delighted with it, which opinion she eagerly confirmed.

Harry and Anna should first be married and settled, and Mrs. Morton, who declared she would not cross the ocean for all the wealth which was upon the other side of it, should live with them during the absence of the tourists.

Such was the sketch of the future which the happy group hastily drew on their first interview, and Harry Eldon, who had been sent for, was soon among them, to add his hilarious congratulations to the general joy.

"How soon can yon be ready to be married, Harry?" asked Paul.

"To-morrow."

"And you, Anna?"

"In two months."

"We'll split the difference; it shall be a month from to-day."

"Oh, impossible, brother! So soon!"

"A month from to-day, Anna—I insist on it!"

And so it was agreed.

Aunt Euphemia, who resided at no great distance from the Mortons, soon heard of the great news, and in the evening she was in their midst, with even her usually dismal face lighted with smiles. She was certainly very glad that her predictions had not been fulfilled; and her gratification was increased by a costly and beautiful present which Paul had been thoughtful enough to bring for her.

But the force of habit was strong with Aunt Euphemia, and before she left she expressed a fear that Paul and Clara, having crossed that dreadful isthmus, might have contracted the "Panama fever."

"Oh, no, auntie; it was freezing cold weather when we came over," said Paul.

"Yes—yes, I know; but you may have got the seeds of it, Paul—both of you, and then it will come out as soon as the warm weather comes."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Eldon and Miss Morton were married at the appointed time, and went directly from church to Anna's own house, which, with its handsome furniture, was a present from her brother; and as Paul also at once invested a sufficient amount of capital in Harry's business to give it vitality, he became thenceforward a prosperous man.

The travelling scheme was postponed until the ensuing autumn, to allow time for hearing of the progress and prospects of the mining company, of which Paul continued to be the chief proprietor. Before that time intelligence was received from Mr. Grey of an important character. One of his nephews had returned from the mines with tidings that they had found and had taken peaceable possession of the old ground, where the yield of gold continued to be most extraordinary.

But they were subject to continual raids from the Indians, who, for some reason, seemed to hold particular guard over the treasures of the Golden Valley. Their depredations, he suggested, had probably been the principal reason why a tract of such unexampled wealth had never been more explored.

In the skirmishes which they had been obliged to have with them, they had already lost one man, a Sonorian laborer; and now the necessity of keeping some constantly on guard, night and day, not only diminished their working force, but impaired the strength and depressed the spirits of the men.

No one knew who might be the next victim to a sly and insidious foe, lurking everywhere, and under all disguises, and prompted probably in part by the direst revenge for their own recent losses.

Under all these circumstances, the messenger had returned in behalf of his partners, to see if a sale of their joint interests could not be advantageously effected to some larger company, who could work it with comparative safety.

As such a transfer would not only include all the ground on which they were at work, but would probably introduce the purchasers to a more extensive region, perhaps equally prolific, it ought, they said, to bring a large sum, and even at the highest valuation which they placed upon their claim, it must leave a most ample margin for profits to the new proprietors.

Mr. Grey fully coincided with these views, and, having a full power to act for Paul, he had at once instituted negotiations for the sale to the same extensive capitalists who had purchased the patent separator.

As this invention had already far exceeded their best anticipations in its behalf, they were the more ready to listen to further propositions from Mr. Grey. At his instance they appointed a competent agent to inspect the ground claimed by the Morton [company, who, having been first sworn to secrecy, at once accompanied Mr. Grey's relative to the Valley.

His report proved decisive. The sale was effected at a very large price, a fourth of which was paid in cash, and the remainder in stock in the new company, at stipulated prices.

As Grey had promptly closed the whole transaction before writing to Paul, nothing remained to be done but to transmit to him, in such a way as he should designate, his part of the purchase money.

This new fortune the young man in due time received, while there were yet rich dividends to be anticipated from the new company.

Even Tim returned home a rich man, for one of his race, and with such an exalted idea of the extent of his wealth that he would have probably felt no surprise at an application from the Government for a loan. Yet there was no unpleasant conceit about him. But having always had a taste for dress, and being, as has been stated, of very tidy habits, Tim, on his return to New York, took great pains to "get himself up" in a style suitable to his new position as a man of means.

In a fashionable suit of clothes, fitting to a nicety, with a gold watch and chain, a diamond pin glistening upon the most irreproachable linen, his ebon hands cased in straw-colored gloves and grasping a gold-headed cane, Tim, erect and portly, was gazed at in Broadway by hundreds of curious passers, and by not a few was pointed out as the deposed Emperor of Hayti, just arrived upon our shores.

In this array he called upon Paul, but in no other respect materially changed from the jolly negro who had so long shared the fortunes of the young adventurer.

After the most hearty and prolonged greeting, and after some hasty interchange of news, his first inquiry was about the welfare of Massa Visscher, to whom, it should have been said, he had sent a half-pound "nugget" as a present, by Paul.

"Ise goin' to do somethin' fur him," Tim said, playing with his watch-chain with quite the air of a Crœsus. "He's a good man, Mass' Visscher is—and I—I mean to take care of him."

Paul encouraged this spirit of generosity, at the same time giving his sable friend some good advice in relation to his property, and telling him to call freely upon him at all times for counsel or assistance.

It was with some difficulty that Morton could ascertain the whereabouts of Raddle, but when he succeeded in doing so, he astonished his friend by the munificent sum to which his promised bonus amounted.

The simple-hearted man, faithful to the calling which he loved, was really at school qualifying himself for a better discharge of the duties to which he was still resolved to devote his life.

In his reply to Paul's letter, he took very evident pleasure in informing him that the new minister who had so unceremoniously ousted him from his pulpit had been dismissed in disgrace, and that he really never had held a license to preach.

"And that," added Elkanah, "was just about how I expected it would turn out."

The second month of autumn was selected for the embarkation of the travellers, and a few weeks before the day of sailing, Tim, in his gala-day attire, called upon Morton, and eagerly preferred a request to be permitted to accompany the party.

Paul was not a little surprised and pleased, but, in some doubt, he immediately inquired:

"In what capacity, Tim, would you go?"

"Oh, in de fust cabin, Cap'n Paul, or second at furdest. No more steerage for me."

"Ah, yes—I do not mean that. I mean, how do you wish to accompany us on our journey? In what position?"

"Oh, as your sarvant, sir, to be sure. I isn't proud, sir, 'ceptin' to be your sarvant. I am proud of that, Cap'n Paul." Tim's sturdy cane came down with an emphasis as he said this. "'Sides, sir," he continued, "I want to travel—I want to see furrin countries—and dis ar is a fust-rate opportunity."

Paul gladly engaged him, for he knew it would add greatly to the general convenience to have such a faithful and able-bodied attendant.

Tim would hear nothing of wages. Paul might pay his travelling expenses if he chose, but even that he was not particular about. He was willing to pay his own way, and still be Paul's servant. All he wanted was to go.

Jacobus Morton had forgotten all his troubles, or remembered them only to rejoice that they had been the means of developing such noble and beautiful traits of character in his dutiful son.

He had yet one more evidence to receive of that son's attachment before leaving his native shores. A few days before they sailed, Paul put into his hands an acquittance from all his creditors, which he had long been engaged in obtaining, accompanying it with a cash draft for thirty thousand dollars.

"I can't have you travelling at my expense, you know, father," he said, laughing; "you must pay your own way."

"But Paul, Paul," said the father, overcome with emotion, and trying to return the money, "I had enough before."

"No, indeed, nor have you enough now! There is more coming one of these days. It shall never be said that my father was a pensioner upon the daily bounty of his son. This money is wholly yours."

Paul pressed the draft again into the hands of his father as he spoke, and left the room.

A very few days before the happy tourists bade adieu to home, Clara received letters from her mother, which contained, among other pleasing news, the startling intelligence that preparations were again making for the marriage of bachelor Grey.

"To whom?" asked Paul, with the utmost eagerness, before Clara could read the sentence through. "To the *widow?*"

"No, no, no!" shouted Clara, laughing with irrepressible glee; "to good, dear, sweet Nelly Rowan! Oh, how glad—how glad I am!"

"And so am I—and so am I! They will be a happy pair, and Grey's magnificent house will not have been prepared in vain, after all."

"Nelly will be one of the first ladies in the city. It may have been her charms, then, which made him so willing to give me up."

"He never could have thought of comparing her with you, dear Clara," said Paul, fondly; "but then, as he probably gets the heart as well as the hand in this case, it is doubtless a wise exchange."

"Indeed it is; and as to Nelly, I always thought her as sweet as she could be. I shall write to her before we sail. But I am surprised, for on that evening he neither danced with her nor showed her any attention."

"On that evening," replied Paul, "I did not dance with you nor show you any attention."

"Very true. I declare," added Clara, with mock indignation, "I believe the sly old fellow wanted to get rid of me all the time."

"Impossible, Clara! Indeed, I know, though I may not tell how, that the generous man's grief was at one time very—very great, indeed!"

"Well, I am sure I am very sorry, and I hope Nelly will succeed in making him entirely forget me; for he is a good man and deserves to be happy."

The voyagers have gone. More than a year have they spent in travel, through Great Britain and the most interesting portions of the Continent, whence frequent tidings of their welfare have come back to their friends in New York.

But nowhere did Mr. Morton's health show such decided signs of improvement as in the mountain air of Switzerland, and there, by medical advice, they resolved to make a sojourn long enough fully to test the efficacy of the climate in restoring the invalid.

There in a quiet village, amidst some of the most magnificent scenery in the world, they still remain, happy in their own little society, in the regard and affection of the simple villagers around them, and in admiration of the beautiful works of God.

THE END.

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THE OTHER GUEST.*

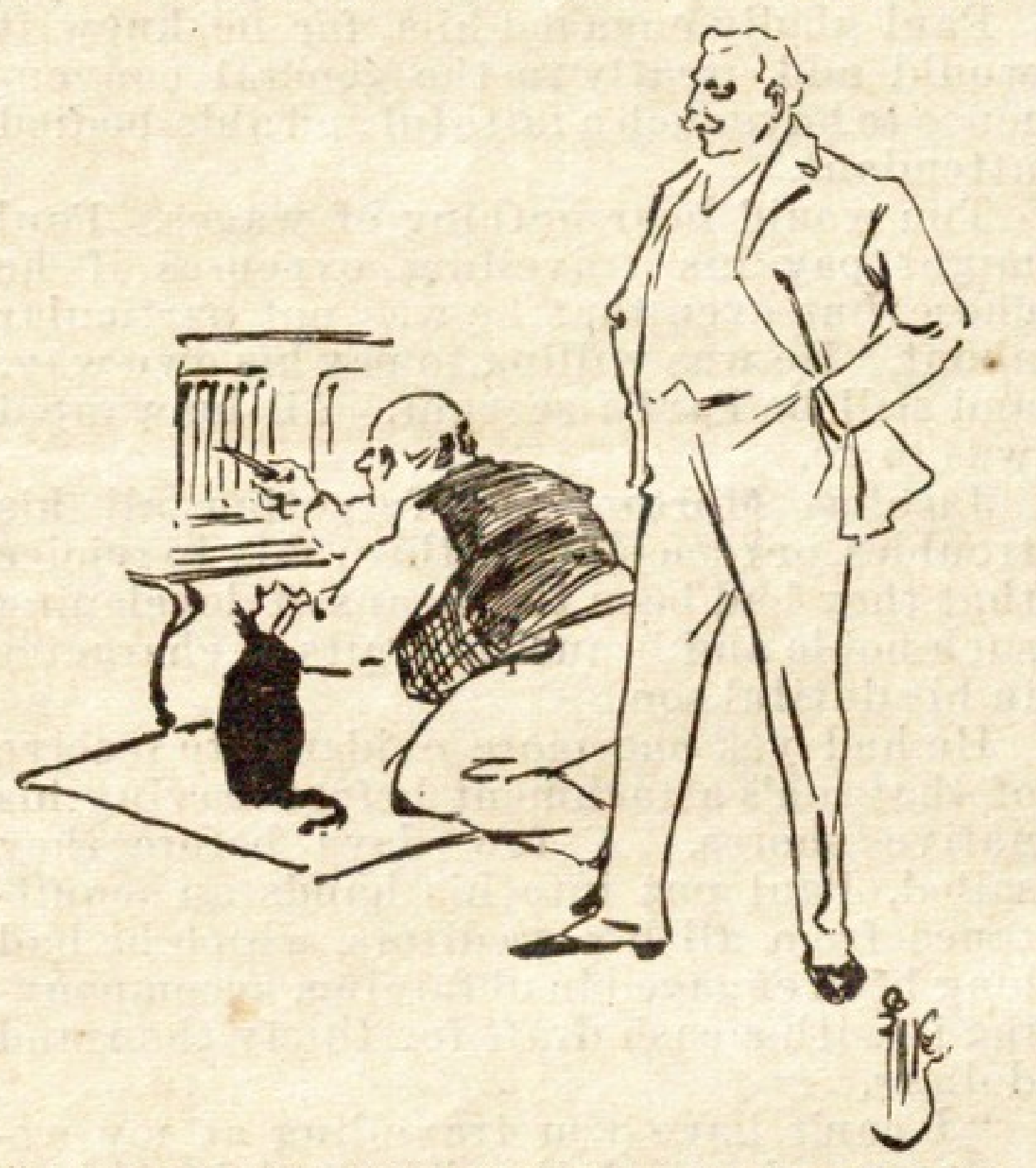
BY GEORGE R. SIMS.

CHAPTER I.

It was a cold Christmas, and a snowy Christmas, and old-fashioned folks who remembered the Christmas numbers of the Dickens days, and had rebelled against the damp, muggy Christmases which had come in with the new literature, rubbed their hands and professed to be highly delighted that the seasons had shown signs of coming to their senses again and returning to the beaten track of conventionality.

A broad-shouldered, gray-headed, vigorous looking man of sixty with signs of weather on his face and the cut of the Colonies about his clothes, stood at a first-floor window of the Fair View Hotel, at Great Malvern, on Christmas Day, and gazed moodily at the white landscape that stretched far away before him.

Then he thrust his hands into his pockets and went downstairs into the coffee-room, and interviewed the waiter, who was stirring the fire with one hand and stroking a fat, black cat with the other.


"ANYBODY ELSE STAYING IN THE HOUSE, WAITER?"

"Anybody else staying in the house, waiter?"

The waiter dropped the poker and turned round sharply with a professional smile of greeting.

"Yes, sir—one gentleman."

"What sort of a gentleman?"

"Young fellow, sir, very quiet, gentlemanly looking young fellow, sir. Only arrived yesterday, sir. London gentleman, I think, sir."

"Has he ordered his dinner here?"

"Yes, sir, in the coffee-room. Six o'clock, sir."

"Hum! He's going to dine alone in the coffee-room on Christmas Day, and I'm going to dine alone in my sitting-room. I wonder whether he'd think it an impertinence if I asked him to dine with me?"

"Can't say, I'm sure, sir. I can't say as I've had much conversation with him up to now, sir."

Mr. John Oldroyd had come to Malvern for a few weeks because he was suffering from an old enemy, rheumatism, and a man at the club had told him that Malvern was an excellent place for rheumatic patients. People arrived there limping and hobbling, and after a few weeks there were climbing the hills before breakfast, and performing marvelous feats of pedestrianism all day long.

It didn't matter very much to John Oldroyd where he went, and he hadn't taken into consideration that he would be in a hotel on Christmas Day, because wherever he had been he would have been equally cast upon his resources for the festivities of the occasion. He had made a fortune in Africa by a lucky mining speculation after knowing all the horrors of being a penniless loafer in a new land, and he had come back to England with the reputation of being a millionaire. But he had left no friends in South Africa, and he had come back to none in England.

His wealth would have given him hosts of acquaintances, but he had never been a man to encourage acquaintances. He was cheery and amiable to every one in business, but out of business he was what is vulgarly called "stand-offish." He very soon let people know that he had no desire for company, and he had never been known to accept an invitation, however heartily it was proffered.

And here was this man who had never cared for the society of any one—who had lived the life of a recluse in the grandest hotels of Europe, suddenly smitten with a desire to have a companion at his Christmas dinner-table at the little Malvern hotel.

When the idea first came to him in the morning, as he sat looking out of his sitting-room window at the quiet little mountain town covered with snow and silent as the grave, save for the clanging of the abbey bells, he had shrugged his shoulders, and put it down to ill-health. Late in life, he was developing "nerves." He thought it might perhaps be the result of the rheumatic attacks from which he had been suffering—attacks which were getting more frequent and more severe every year, and the seeds of which had been sown in the old days when he roughed it in a wild, inhospitable country, and spent long days and nights in the cold and damp, with a pipe of tobacco for his only luxury and an old horse rug for his only blanket.

"I suppose it's nerves," he said, "but I never felt like it before, and it's not at all a pleasant sensation. Why the dickens should I want somebody to dine with me this evening? I've dined alone dozens of Christmas Days before, and nothing's troubled me, not even my conscience. But now—"

And then he had a fresh symptom, which alarmed him more than the idea of nerves. He began to think—to conjure up memories of the past, to see back into his life—far, far back to a time that he had forced himself for years to forget.

What he saw made his lips quiver, and a gray look came into his face, and sent him downstairs in a hurry to interview the waiter as to the possibility of finding a fellow-guest to make some kind of company for him for Christmas Day.

While he was talking to the waiter the "other guest" came into the coffee-room. He had on his hat and overcoat, and was evidently just going out.

He was a tall, good-looking young fellow of about twenty-and-five, but his face was pale and his eyes had a dull, heavy look, as though he hadn't had a good night's rest. "An invalid—here for the air like myself," thought Oldroyd. "Perhaps he'll be as glad—as glad of my company as I shall be of his."

The young man called the waiter to him.

"You asked me at breakfast what time I'd dine," he said, "and I said six, but I'd forgotten it was Christmas Day. Perhaps you'll be wanting to go out; if so, any hour will do for me."

"Thank you, sir," said the waiter. "I'm going home to my young uns at one, sir, just to sit down with 'em at the kids' dinner, sir, and I must be back for this gentleman at six, sir; so six will suit me very well, sir."

Mr. Oldroyd saw his opportunity.

"I hope you won't think it presumption on my part or an impertinence," he said, "but we seem to be two lonely men in an inn on Christmas Day, and if you would give me the pleasure of your company to dinner to-night, in my sitting-room, I—er—I assure you I should be very grateful."

The young man hesitated.

"You are very good," he said, after a pause, "but you don't know me, and—"

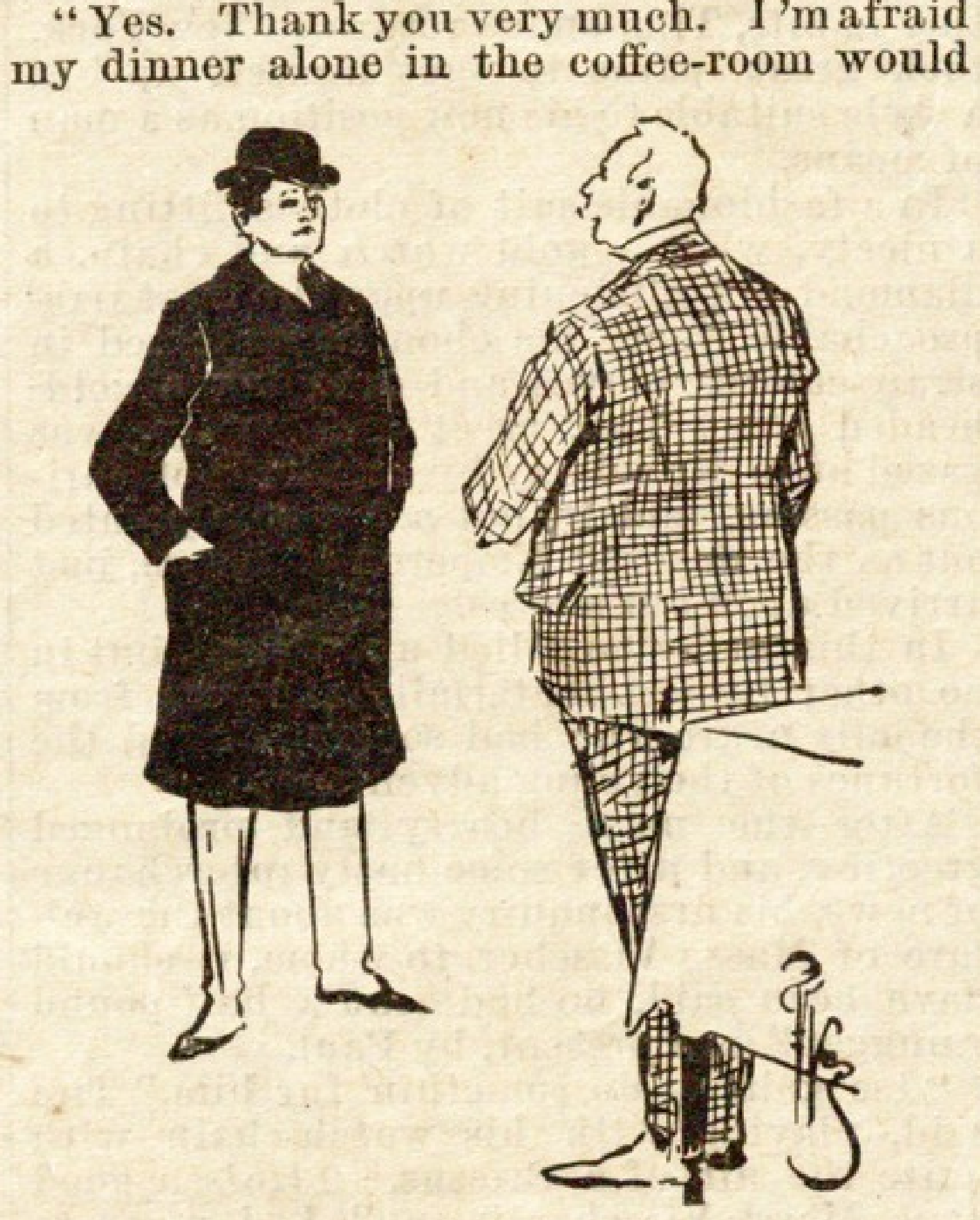
"And you don't know me, that's true. As there is nobody to introduce us, we must introduce ourselves. My name is Oldroyd—John Oldroyd. I believe I have been written about a good deal in the papers since my return from South Africa, and you may have heard something about me. The South African Crœsus, I believe I am occasionally called."

The young man looked up at the elder one, scanned him quietly for a moment, and then heaved a deep sigh.

"You are a lucky man, sir. I can't understand your having to ask a stranger to be your companion on Christmas Day, but if it will really give you pleasure to have my society, I will accept your hospitality with pleasure. My name is Weston—Arthur Weston—and I am not a millionaire."

"Thank your lucky stars, sir, that you are not: but you are going out. Six o'clock—in my room—that's understood."

"Yes. Thank you very much. I'm afraid my dinner alone in the coffee-room would have been a very cheerless one. Good morning."


"YOU ARE VERY GOOD," HE SAID.

The two men bowed pleasantly to each other, and Arthur Weston went out of the hotel and strode off rapidly in the direction of the hills.

"A nice young fellow, that, a very nice young fellow," said Mr. Oldroyd to himself, "but he's got something on his mind. Well, he hasn't had it there so long as I have, and so I suppose he hasn't got so used to it. Waiter?"

"Yes, sir!"

"Let the dinner be the best you can manage and the best wine in the cellar. Bring me your wine list upstairs and I'll look it over; and, by the bye, I wouldn't let you put any green stuff in my room yesterday, but as I am going to have company, you can stick some holly and mistletoe about. I'd like to make that young man feel as Christmassy as possible. He looks as if he wanted it."

Punctually at six o'clock Arthur Weston came upstairs into old Mr. Oldroyd's sitting-room. The dinner was perfect. (I have eaten my Christmas dinner more than once in the old-fashioned Malvern Hotel—never, thank Heaven, quite alone—and I can vouch for the excellency of the kitchen and the cellar.) Both men were genial and amiable, and under the influence of the surroundings became more and more at ease with each other. But the geniality was in each case a little hollow and a little forced, and each of them knew by instinct that the other was playing a part.

The elder man drank as much as the younger, but he was more seasoned, and the wine had no effect upon him. He was always John Oldroyd, the cautious, shrewd, reticent man of business; but Arthur Weston gradually began to talk more rapidly and with greater emphasis. By the time the dessert had been reached, and the port was on the table, there was an air of reckless gayety about him which contrasted strongly with his earlier manner.

Until now the conversation had been on general topics; gradually it became more personal, and when presently host and guest wheeled their arm-chairs round in front of the blazing fire and settled themselves comfortably to the coffee and cigars, both began to be a little more confidential.

"Odd, isn't it," said Weston, "that we, two strangers to each other, should be spending our Christmas Day together, like old friends?"

"Odd, yes, but none the less pleasant. I suppose you've generally spent your Christmas Day with your—er—family or friends."

A shade passed over the young man's face.

"Yes," he replied, fixing his eyes on a smoke-ring that was curling gracefully to the ceiling. "Yes, it's my first Christmas away from home."

"Had to come here for your health, I suppose, too far to go back again just for Christmas."

"No; my people live in London. I came here to see a friend. He was expected home for Christmas last night, but he hasn't come. He's been taken ill abroad, and his wife has started off to be with him."

"Ah, you were going to spend your Christmas with them."

"No, I—well, I don't see that it matters. I'm your guest and I have no right to sail under false colors. I was going to borrow some money of him."

"Ah!"

For a moment the old caution of the business man sent John Oldroyd back into his shell. Millionaires generally have a preoccupied air when an acquaintance begins to talk about money troubles; but he looked across at the young man's face and something in it roused his sympathy at once.

"Ah," he said, "it's an awful thing how frequently friends manage to be out of the way when you want them. And so you've had a long journey, and to-morrow, I suppose, you'll go back to town."

"No."

"Going to stay on here for a bit, eh? I'm glad of that. We shall see more of each other, and you'll be company for me."

"No, you've been awfully good to me, Mr. Oldroyd, but I don't think we shall ever meet again after to-night."

"But you're not going back, you say."

"No—but don't ask me any more. You'll know everything to-morrow."

Know everything to-morrow! What could this young man mean? What was he going to do? What was to happen that he, John Oldroyd, would know everything to-morrow?

He began to grow uneasy. He had felt certain from the first that this young fellow had something on his mind. He had come down here to borrow money, and had spent his Christmas away from his family. He was trying to think out the story of his guest for himself, when the guest, evidently divining his thoughts, stopped them.

"There," he said, "I beg your pardon for talking about myself and my affairs. It really wasn't my fault, you know; you asked me questions, and I answered them. Come, let's get on to a more cheerful subject. Tell me something about South Africa."

CHAPTER II.

It was past midnight when Mr. Oldroyd's guest rose and held out his hand.

"Thank you for a very jolly evening," he said, "the jolliest I've spent for a long time past. I'll say good-night, for I've a lot of writing to do before I go to sleep."

"Good night, if you won't stay any longer, and thank you for helping a lonely man to get over Christmas Day. I hope, in spite of what you said, that I shall see more of you."

Arthur Weston shook his head.

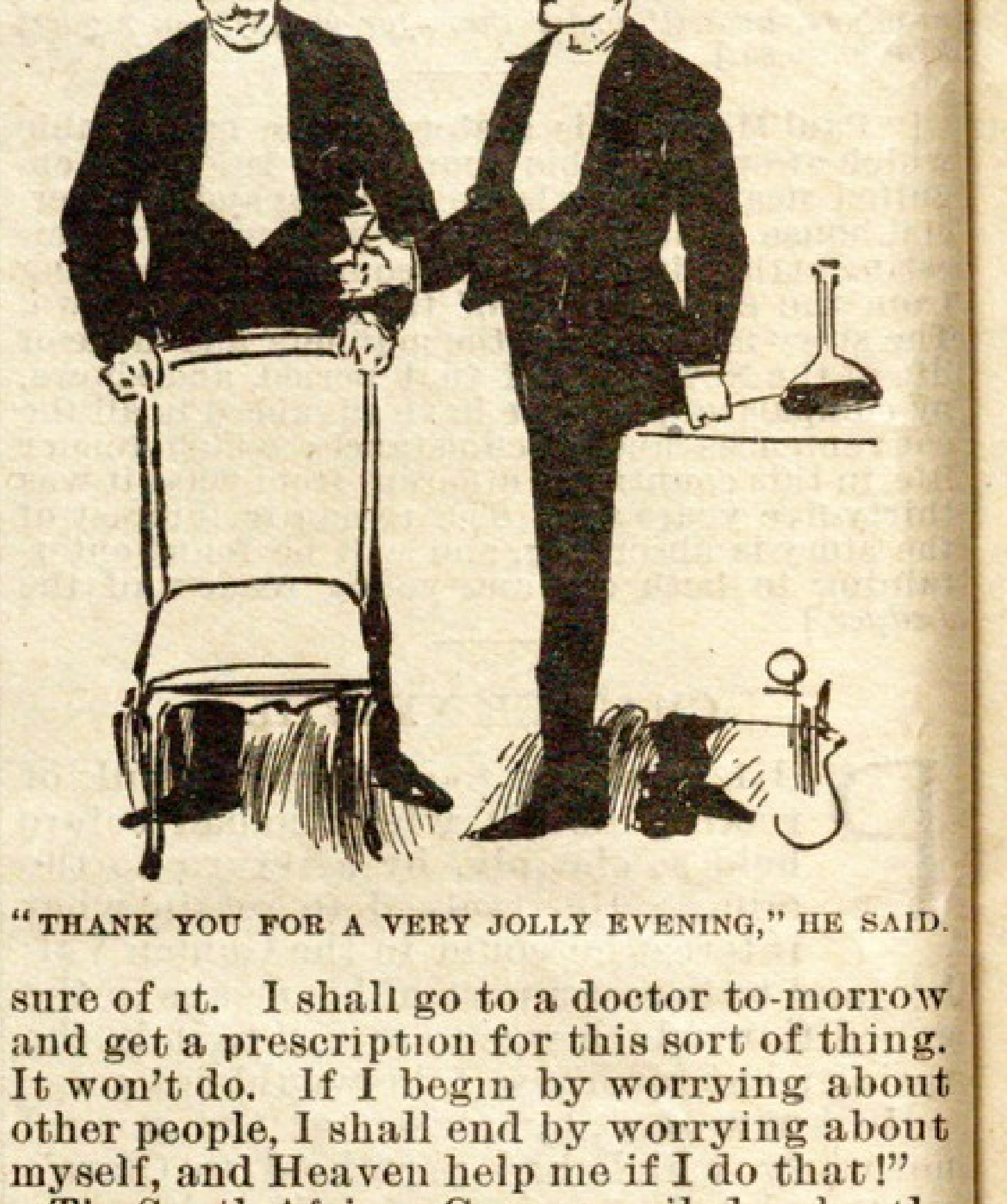
"No, it's a good-night and good-bye, and as we shan't meet again, a Happy New Year to you."

"The same to you, and many of them."

John Oldroyd, after the departure of his guest, lit another cigar and sat staring at the fire and thinking.

The young fellow had interested him. Do what he would, he couldn't get it out of his head that there was something about him that he hadn't quite fathomed. He was certain that he was unhappy, and that he was in trouble. But, after all, he was only a chance acquaintance—a fellow-guest in a hotel, and if you began to take up the troubles of a chance acquaintance you might as well become a Father Confessor or be secretary of the Charity Organization Society at once.

"I'm beginning to be a fool in my old age," said John Oldroyd. "It's nerves, I'm sure of it. I shall go to a doctor to-morrow and get a prescription for this sort of thing. It won't do. If I begin by worrying about other people, I shall end by worrying about myself, and Heaven help me if I do that!"


"THANK YOU FOR A VERY JOLLY EVENING," HE SAID.

The South African Crœsus smiled a ghastly sort of smile, poured himself out a liquor glass full of brandy, tossed it off, flung the end of his cigar into the fire, lighted his candle, turned out the sitting-room gas and went upstairs to bed.

As he went along the corridor leading to his room, he saw a light through the glass let into one of the bedroom doors. There were no other guests in the house. This must be Arthur Weston's room.

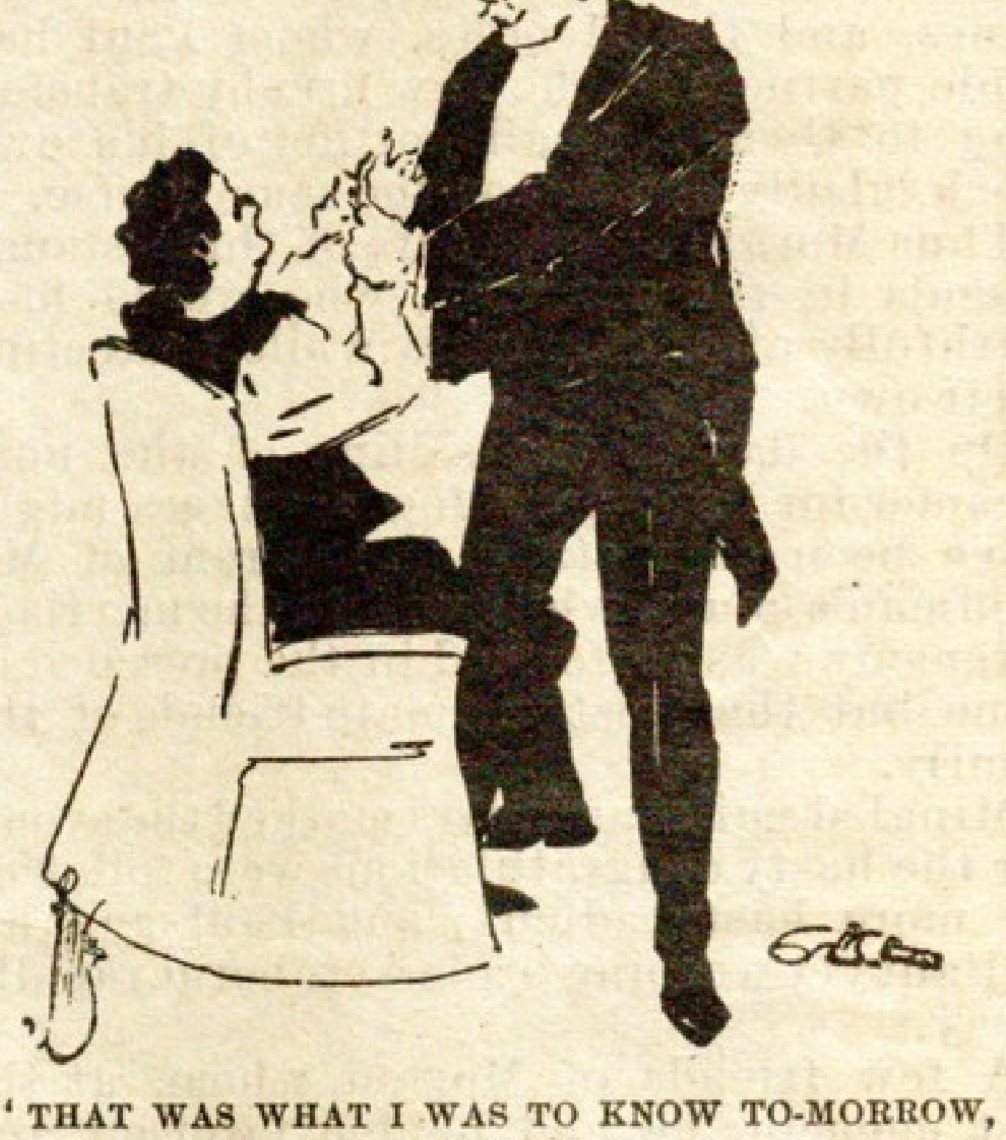
"Good-night," he said, as he passed. There was no answer. He paused a moment to listen, and a gust of wind blew along the corridor from a window at the end of the passage, and his candle went out.

He went to his bedroom, groped about for a match and found that there were none. So he went back determined to ask his guest for one. When he reached the bedroom door he paused and started back alarmed.

Mr. Arthur Weston was talking aloud to himself.

"I must do it," he said. "I must do it. Heaven help me, there is no other way."

Then in the silence of the night there was a click, and John Oldroyd, who had carried a revolver day and night in the old rough days in South Africa, knew that click, and without a moment's hesitation turned the handle of the door to see if it was locked, and finding it was not, pushed it open and rushed in.


"THAT WAS WHAT I WAS TO KNOW TO-MORROW, WAS IT?"

A moment more and he had knocked a loaded revolver from Arthur Weston's trembling hand, and had seized him by the wrists and forced him into a chair.

"That was what I was to know to-morrow, was it? Come, now, you've got to make a clean breast of everything to me, or I'll call up the house, and send for the police and give you into custody for attempting to commit suicide."

It was past three in the morning when John Oldroyd, the South African millionaire, sat down in an easy-chair by the side of Arthur Weston's bed, and settled himself for the night.

He wasn't going to give that young gentleman a chance of playing with firearms again, or doing anything equally foolish.

His motto was that of General MacMahon, of the French Republic: "*J'y suis, J'y reste*," and he rested.

He had managed to extract the young man's story, told between hysterical outbreaks and fits of moody silence. It was not a story very much out of the ordinary, yet it had affected the hardened man of the world far more deeply than he cared to let his companion see.

Young Weston had, through the influence of his father, a gentleman of good family, but of limited income, obtained an excellent

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position as assistant secretary to a fashionable West End club, largely frequented by young men of position, who were heavy gamblers on the turf and inveterate card players. The secretary, a retired military officer, was, owing to illness, frequently absent for long periods, and Arthur Weston had things very much in his own hands for many weeks at a time. He was a great favorite with the members, the committee trusted him implicitly, and there was every prospect that in spite of his youth he would at no very distant date obtain the position which failing health must soon compel the present holder to relinquish. Unfortunately the young fellow had been successful in one or two turf transactions which had been recommended him by a certain racing member—a young nobleman who owned race-horses and gambled on the turf heavily. The young man, finding he was making money easily, thought he was on the high road to fortune and began to plunge. Then came a series of reverses. To meet his liabilities—not to have done so would have led to his dismissal and his practical ruin—in an evil hour he took advantage of his chief's absence and borrowed a large sum of money which had passed through his hands. He had been unable to repay it, and he had come down to Malvern, having obtained a few days' leave, to see a relative of his father, who was a rich man, and who had always taken a great interest in him. He had determined to make a clean breast of everything, borrow the money and repay it when he had improved his position sufficiently to enable him to do so. But this gentleman had been taken ill abroad, and there was nothing left for him but go back to the club, and face the certain discovery and probably prosecution. That he could not bring himself to do. His people had not the command of ready money; his father was dead. He could not bear to think of his mother's grief and shame, of the horror of a criminal, and so he determined to carry out the intention he had formed when he fancied that perhaps his Malvern friend might refuse to assist him.

That was the ordinary part of the story. The special feature which had appealed to John Oldroyd was this: The young man had in the course of his narrative explained that his father had been ruined soon after he came of age by the dishonesty of a trusted friend, a young man of his own age, whom he had trusted implicitly, and who had induced him to put the whole of his capital, some £5,000, into a business to which he had succeeded, and this friend had, after a couple of years, suddenly disappeared, leaving nothing but a bankrupt estate and several charges of fraud behind him.

That interested John Oldroyd immensely.

At ten o'clock the next morning, the South African millionaire and the assistant secretary of the club breakfasted together. After breakfast the millionaire went to his dispatch box, took out his check book and wrote a check. It was for the amount of Arthur Weston's liability.

"You'll cash that at the bank to-morrow," he said, "and pay the notes into the club's account at once, and then the balance will be correct on the 31st of December."

The young man wrung his benefactor's hand.

"How shall I repay you?"

"I'll tell you," said John Oldroyd. "You'll repay me by giving me your solemn promise that when in a month's time there arrives at your mother's house a registered letter containing bank-notes for £10.000 with an intimation that they are the sum of which your father's former partner defrauded him, with the interest to date, you will not lead her to imagine that they may really be from some one else who has heard the story."

"You mean that you will send the— Oh, no, we have no claim. You—"

"Don't argue about it. I'm rich, and I've no one to leave my money to—not a friend in the world. And I know the man who robbed your father. Oldford you said his name was I knew him in South Africa after he'd made money and was doing well. He was a good fellow to me at the beginning, and it was his advice that put me on the right road to getting the property that made my fortune. He died out there just as fortune was coming to him, or he'd have paid up and put things straight himself. I'm doing this for his sake, my lad, and not for anybody else's, and it's no more than he deserves that I should do for him. And when I've done it I shall be a happier man, and I sha'n't for the rest of my life be afraid of spending a Christmas day alone, though I shall always look back upon the one I spent with you as the happiest I have known for many a long year. So pack up your traps, and get off to London by the first train, and God bless you."

John Oldroyd sent the notes as he had promised, and Arthur Weston held his peace, and old Mrs. Weston shed tears of gratitude, and decided that the ways of human nature were wonderful, and that her husband's former partner couldn't have been a really bad man, after all.

And Arthur Weston thinks he wasn't, or John Oldroyd would never have spoken so well of him. But perhaps John Oldroyd's sympathy was prompted by circumstances that Arthur Weston will never guess, nor, for the matter of that, will anybody else guess them. It would interfere considerably with the peace of mind of John Oldroyd, the South African millionaire, if any one but himself ever did.

THE END.

Russia As It Is.

The Czar's Daughter.

BY SOPHIE FRIEDLAND.

VIII.

Decidedly the good old times in Russia are changing. Instead of the expected heir to the throne, we are informed by the papers "that the Russian people feel happy at the birth of a Grand-Duchess." Of course, if the papers say that we feel happy, there is no doubt that we do; but let me add in private that we cannot help feeling a little disappointed, too. Our young Czar was a first-born, his father was the direct heir to a first-born heir, and his grandfather, Alexander II., was the oldest of Emperor Nicholas's children; so, when we heard the shots from the citadel announcing the arrival of a new member of the Czar's family, we took it for granted that they also proclaimed the birth of an heir.

As our disappointment could not be brought home to anybody in particular, and as we are really growing fond of our young Emperor and Empress, we did not sulk long. November 4th found our capital in full dress. Flags, portraits and busts of the Imperial family decorated the houses, and the illumination in the evening was a great success. In the theatres and at concerts the national hymn was repeated three times, and cries of "Long live the Imperial family!" were heard at every meeting. There was a special service in every church of the Empire, and the public in general felt altogether in holiday-spirits, particularly our school children, who were excused from work for three days.

The little Grand-Duchess was born on Saint Olga's Day and is named, according to a rule of the Greek Church, Olga—Olga Nicholaevna. This is quite a frequent name in the Imperial family. Great favorites of the late Czar were his aunt, Olga Nicholaevna, Queen of Wuertemberg, and his cousin, Olga Constantinovna, Queen of Greece, besides his youngest daughter Olga, who is now in her fifteenth year.

Children whose parents belong to the Greek Church receive their name as soon as they are born, but they are not baptized before they are six weeks old. There is no doubt that the christening of the Czar's first-born child will be a splendid affair, which will bring many an imperial and royal personage to the banks of the Neva.

Meanwhile Grand-Duke George, the Czar's brother, is still regarded as the direct heir to the throne of the Romanoffs, although it is well-known that even if the Czar should die before a son was born to him, he could never ascend the throne. He is slowly dying of consumption, and this is the reason why the late Czar, his father, agreed to his marriage with a lady who, although of noble birth, could never be a Czar's wife. Last year she and her two children were visiting in St. Petersburg, but it was not even in public breathed that she was so closely related to the Imperial family.

It was very fortunate that little Grand-Duchess Olga was born in Larskoe Selo, and not in St. Petersburg, or else her cradle might have been rocked by the waves of the Fontanka, instead of by electricity.

Once more I must repeat that the good old times seem to be passing away, for instead of the usual sleighing, skating and other winter pleasures, which usually begin in November, we have an inundation. The Neva and the Fontanka, as well as the many big canals passing through St. Petersburg, have overflowed their banks, and for three days our city might have been compared to Venice.

On the night of November 1st we had a terrible sea storm, and the water of the Neva was slowly beginning to rise. This, however, did not prevent our pleasure-loving St. Petersburgians from going to a concert on the Krestovsky Island, where the winter season is always opened on the first.

The orchestra had just finished the first part when we heard the well-known signal from the fortress, and before we could realize the danger of an inundated island, the concert hall was full of water. No words can describe the confusion which followed. On the top of the building was a covered roof, and there we took refuge. For a moment it seemed as if the water was inclined to follow, but, fortunately, it stopped, and after a time we made the best of a situation which was far from pleasant. Toward morning some of the roof inhabitants were beginning to feel hungry, but alas! the water had washed away not only the nice things that were prepared in the dining-rooms but also the whole pantry. "I offer you ten roubles for a sandwich," I heard a gentleman call out to one of the waiters. He might as well have offered a mine of gold—no sandwich, not even a crust of dry bread, was to be had that night on all Krestovsky Island.

At about eight o'clock in the morning the water began to fall, and at ten I was once more in my own room, happy that I had only been a heroine and not a victim of the inundation.

The damage done through the inundation is enormous. The suburbs of St. Petersburg have suffered most, for the lower part of every house has been overflowed. On the boulevards of Vassily Ostrov (Pasil's Islands) and on the squares there are still rivers and lakes, covered with small boats, which form the sole communication for the 30,000 inhabitants of the island. In the center of our capital the water has overflowed the beautiful Quay of the Admiralty to the Winter Palace and the borders of the Fontanka (a river which flows through St. Petersburg). In the middle of the street, trunks, mattresses and all kinds of furniture flow about in all directions, and the general aspect is very distressing.

In the Smolensky Cemetery the graves were washed away, and the monuments and crosses overturned. The level of the water rose ten feet higher than ordinarily, a fact never noticed before in the history of the inundations from which our city now and then has to suffer.

As our *beau monde* have not yet returned from their country seats, society in general has been rather dull these last weeks, and the inundation afforded a new subject for conversation.

"Why do we talk so little about the Armenian question?" I asked a politician the other day.

"Because we feel very little interest in the Armenians themselves. They are worse than the Turks. They have noticed that the government on the Balkan was growing weaker all the time, and they thought it the right moment to start a revolutionary movement."

The English and Austrian papers report unheard-of cruelties committed in the streets of Constantinople every day, but these reports are often contradicted by our correspondents. The last thing I read in the foreign papers was that twelve hundred mounted mountaineers from the Haman were marching against the Turks. A gentleman who has visited the Haman assures us that even a hundred horses could not be found in the whole region. To judge by the foreign press, we seem to be on the eve of a great European war; but if that really were the case, we would not be quite so calm.

The *Novaja Vremja*, referring to the last speech of Lord Salisbury at Guildhall, says:

> "The Honorable Lord and the *Fremdenblatt* speak of a complete agreement between the European Powers, but they do not explain of what this agreement consists. The public, consequently, has to look for the explanation in the past. This is not an easy thing to do, for whenever the Oriental question was brought to the front by the course of events, it came to light that some of the Powers showed egotistical intentions.
>
> "We Russians still remember the results of our last war with Turkey. We still remember why England and Austria were so anxious for a modification of the Treaty of San Stefano; England received Cyprus, and Austria took possession of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The tone in which the English, Austrian and Italian press treat the Oriental question does not convince us that the Powers who at present join in the naval demonstrations act with the same disinterestedness as the Russians and the French. So far, the question as to the fate of Turkey, in case the Sultan should not be able to fulfill the demands put before him, remains an open one.
>
> "It would be highly desirable," continues the *Novaja Vremja*, "that the leading part in this matter should be left to Russia and France, and that these Powers should be supported by Germany, which is least interested in the Turkish question. In order to secure the stability of a European peace, it will be necessary that the agreement between the Powers should be made on grounds in which the individual interests of each should not collide with the other. This task is not an easy one, and we trust that the Sultan will be able to arrange matters in his own country without our interference."

As I have said, Russia is not interested in European politics. Her interests are more in Asia, and we attribute great importance, under the present circumstances, to the change of the English Minister to Russia. We notice in this change a certain alteration in the position of English politics in regard to the Oriental question in Europe; and, more than that, we notice a particular circumspection in regard to matters in the far East. The Russian press seems to think that England has changed her former views as to the Oriental question in Europe, even as to the existence of Turkey, and is now turning her full attention to the events in the far East. This is the reason why Lord Salisbury prefers to have a diplomat in St. Petersburg who is entirely *au courant* with China and Japan, and who will, therefore, be able to follow successfully the intentions of Russia, and thus guard the interests of his country in Asia.

We are not acquainted with the instructions with which Sir O'Connor enters on his new position, but we are sure that the new minister will not limit his efforts solely to the English interests in the Orient, where at present no danger is threatening, but that he will be anxious to establish and keep up a good understanding upon all Asiatic matters, old and new. England has felt all the disadvantages of an isolated position. In regard to the Armenian question, she had to acknowledge that her politics are as venturous as they are useless. Willing or unwilling, she had to come to an agreement with Russia and France, and at present all Powers who have signed the Berlin treaty are called upon to "step in." Sir O'Connor is well aware that the isolated position of England in Asia was not a success. Now an opportunity is offered to him to find a more favorable way for English politics. He will understand that the time has come when it would be useless to show Russia enmity everywhere. Russia has now reliable allies, and sufficient means to give trouble, particularly in a direction where every blow might be felt deeply.

The Russian press seems to think that it would be more advantageous for England to come to a final agreement with Russia, and the enlightened party in England fully agrees to this.

Russia and England both have quite enough to do to keep their own Asiatic affairs in order, and they really need put no obstacles in the way of each other.

The time is past when Russia believed in the assurance of English sincerity, and although Czar Nicholas is as peace-loving as his father was, he fully understands his power, and will not be trifled with. This is the reason why he cares so little for the events in the Balkan. The ingratitude of Bulgaria was fully proved, and Russia will no more be taken in with fine words.

FAT IN COLD WEATHER.

Whilst clothing preserves our internal heat, we look to food to produce it. Fat, flour and sugar are the cheapest and best heat-producers, and should, therefore, form a large part of our winter fare. One instinctively turns to fat in frosty weather; but professedly few people recognize its true value as an article of diet during winter. It is not only an economical diet, but it is especially indicated in the case of persons not in robust health, who will be the less able to resist the depressing effects of cold and all its risks in proportion to the amount of fat they intermix with their food. Fat contains an average of 50 per cent. of carbon, and, whilst it thus readily affords heat to the system, yet, in itself, it exerts an important influence over the digestion of other articles of diet. It is for this reason that a teaspoonful of cod-liver oil, taken in the middle or immediately after a meal, acts as an admirable aid to digestion in certain forms of dyspepsia, Fat, of course, must not be rushed at and eaten in quantity without properly diluted; thus we instinctively combine certain articles of diet so as to obtain a due admixture of fat. We mix fat meat with a large quantity of potatoes, liver with bacon, cabbage with bacon, veal with bacon, and pork with boiled haricot beans or peas. The last dish reminds us of the cold day on which the Princess Elizabeth was liberated from the Tower; she went first of all to the Church of All Hallows to offer her devotions, and then proceeded to a neighboring tavern, the King's Head in Fenchurch Street, where she dined off peas and pork.

Looking at the energy and warmth that fat can supply, it has often struck us that the soup distributed at winter soup-kitchens might, with advantage, contain more of that important element. The quantity of peas in such soup is out of proportion to the fat.

As a matter of fact, all fats are alike from a dietetic point of view, and little of this food principle is wasted in the body; nay, it is more perfectly absorbed and turned to a more practical use than the lean of meat. It only becomes a question of the comparative digestibility of the various fats, and this is in proportion to the temperature at which they become liquefied. Wax could be digested if the heat of the stomach had power to reduce it to a liquid condition. The low melting point of butter gives it an immense advantage as an article of cold-weather diet, and its liberal use in winter is strongly recommended to both the invalid and the robust. Margarine is really a very good substitute for butter, and we eat it in pastry and at public dinners and clubs oftener than we reckon upon. It is prepared from mutton or beef fat only. An ox contains about fifty-six pounds of suet and a sheep about eight pounds. The suet is melted at a low heat, clarified, and run into vats, where, on cooling, it assumes a pasty consistence. Then small quantities of this fat are wrapped in clean white cloths and subjected to a pressure of a hundred tons. This process separates out the stearin or tallow, and leaves a perfectly wholesome fat and good substitute for butter.

MEMORIES.

BY ARTHUR SYMONS.

As a perfume doth remain
In the folds where it hath lain,
  So the thought of you remaining
Deeply folded in my brain,
  Will not leave me; all things leave me;
You remain.

Other thoughts may come and go,
Other moments I may know,
  That shall waft me, in their going,
As a breath blown to and fro,
  Fragrant memories: fragrant memories
Come and go.

Only thoughts of you remain
In my heart where they have lain,
  Perfumed thoughts of you remaining,
A hidden sweetness in my brain.
  Others leave me; all things leave me;
You remain.

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HAPPY NEW YEAR.

Happy New Year to the world and they that dwell therein! 1896 means much to all those who earnestly desire to score a record for good during the next 365 days. One of our most eminent scientists, in a conversation the other day, said that we were on the eve of the most astonishing discoveries in the history of the human race, and that the present is a period laden with interest to all thinking men and women. He declared that in electricity alone the revelations that the next year may bring forth will be surprising in the extreme.

And what is true of electricity is true of everything else. A spirit of "Forward—march!" is in the air, and the world is full of the promises and profits that come to those who studiously work and hopefully look toward the unfolding of events. Business is going to be better, and we are going to elect a new President. Who it is to be, a great many people in this country would like to know. But for this, and a great many other things, we must wait the fullness of time.

The beginning of the New Year has been from time immemorial a season for good resolutions, and 1896 will be the best year in the history of the race for making them.

There is so much in the world that is worth while, so much that is worth working for, looking for and hoping for, that there is a new incentive in everything that promises an improvement on the things present and past. Brush away the cobwebs, brighten up the good motives, mend those that are a trifle shaky with brand-new ones, and let every day witness the turning over of a new leaf. And when the leaves are turned, weight them with inflexible determination and good principles. Weight them so heavily that they will be in no danger of blowing back, and keep watch that their whiteness is unsullied by anything unworthy.

The world's storehouses are full of treasures, and only by earnest endeavor and patient toil can we make them our own.

Many times we prize most highly the things that are the most difficult to obtain. There is genuine satisfaction in having accomplished some great thing—satisfaction doubled if it is that of which failure has been predicted. The greatest conquests of life are not made on battlefields; the greatest heroes are not always laurel-crowned of men. Oftentimes it is only after they have passed on to the great and silent majority that they are appreciated. Many times they are not appreciated at all, but, all the same, the glory of the Conqueror is theirs.

> "He who has all single-handed stood,
> Beset with unseen foes on every side,
> And, unregarded of the multitude,
> The powers of fate has met, defied
> And conquered silently; ah, that soul knows
> With what white heat the blood of triumph glows!"

◆

THE REPORT OF THE POST-OFFICE DEPARTMENT.

The Postmaster-General reports that business depression has seriously affected the revenue of the Department. General financial stringency always touches the poor and those of moderate means first, and the masses of the people find that even letter-writing is an expensive luxury. The revenues of all the post-offices have decreased for this reason.

There are, however, signs of returning prosperity clearly shown. The Postmaster-General recommends some amendments of the laws regarding the transportation of second-class matter, and advises more careful classification. There is an enormous amount of what is known as County free matter, being that which is circulated among subscribers free of postage in the respective counties of publication. The Civil Service system is advocated for letter-carriers, and it is recommended that selections be made on a basis of very high merit. The carrier is supposed to enter the service by merit alone, and is to be encouraged to maintain a very high order of efficiency. There is no hint that the pay of carriers is to be increased, a thing that certainly ought to be done, considering the importance of the service and the long hours of labor. The suggestion is made to put certain grades of postmasters under the Civil Service system, but this is as yet in the distant future.

◆

CHURCH PAWN SHOPS.

Something over a year ago a number of wealthy and benevolent gentlemen, impressed with the hardships endured by those who find it necessary to make temporary loans on personal property, formed a Provident Loan Society's Pawnshop in a mission building of the church at Fourth Avenue and Twenty-second Street. This Society had for its object the advancing of small sums of money to persons in urgent need.

The regular pawn-broker charges interest and commission of the most extortionate description. When the regular pawn-broker finds that he can charge but a certain rate, without liability, he tacks a sort of annex or addendum to this business in the way of a purchasing department. So common had this abuse become that this church society started a Loan Association with an enormous capital, with a direct idea of assisting the worthy poor or those who were in temporary straits.

The business has been running a little more than a year. Over $500,000 has been loaned, and $200,000 has already been paid with interest. The Society has sales of unredeemed pledges, and the entire management is conducted on the strictest commercial principles. So satisfactory has this arrangement proven that other associations of the same sort are to be formed with a view to breaking up the outrageous extortions of the ordinary pawn-shop. It is bad enough for people to be obliged to part with articles of value, whether necessities or luxuries, but to let them go and feel that there is little prospect of recovering them is discouraging indeed.

Very great benefit has resulted to many deserving persons, and, as a substitute for charity, the Provident Society's Helping Hand is an extremely welcome one.

◆

ELOCUTION AND THE STAGE.

A number of letters have been received by the *Ledger* asking about the study of elocution, stage training and similar subjects. Most of them indicate that the writers think the profession of an actor an easy, agreeable and profitable one, others prefer the study of elocution, with a view to giving readings and entertainments of a similar nature.

There are few accomplishments that are as imperfectly taught and as badly managed as elocution. Where there is one really superior reader, there are thousands who are simply a weariness to the flesh and a torture to sensitive ears. The badly-trained elocutionist either mouths his words, mumbles them or shouts them. Ordinary conversations are rendered in tones that suggest rapid riding over a corduroy road, so full of ups and downs, inflections and jerkings are they. A finished elocutionist makes you forget that there is a reading or recitation going on, and you simply float along, absorbed in the interest of the subject.

One of the highest compliments an elocutionist ever received was that given by an elderly man who, for the first time in his life, heard a reading given by a man with a world-wide reputation. The selection was a familiar one, and when the reader came to the verse:

> "The boys were playing the same old game,
> Beneath that same old tree;
> I do forget the name just now—
> You've played it there with me,"

the old gentleman slightly rose in his chair and called out:

"It was mumblety-peg, sir, mumblety-peg."

The reader afterwards said that in a long and successful career—and he was a gray-headed man at this time—he had never received such a gratifying recognition of his ability.

To become a finished elocutionist, a study of the methods and manners of people of all classes is one of the items of importance. Theories, gestures, artificial tones and distorted expressions not only never made a good artist of this sort, but have spoiled many that might otherwise have been tolerable. Naturalness is the first need of the good reader or the finished actor.

◆

THE NEW YEAR'S ADMONITION.

BY HELEN WHITNEY CLARK.

We bid you welcome, New Year!
Your joyful dawn we sing!
And have you brought us golden gifts
Beneath your shining wing?
O, will your skies be always fair,
Your seasons always gay,
With not a single cloud to mar
The brightness of the day?

And will you tell the Springtime
Her favors we bespeak,
When we in sylvan glades and glens
Her earliest trophies seek?
Will March forbear to flout us
With blustering jibes and jeers,
And April show her sunniest smiles
In place of frowns and tears?

Will Summer bring her roses
To deck the woodland bowers,
With not a single cruel thorn
Concealed among her flowers?
And will she coyly linger
When harvest songs go round,
Till all the gleaming swaths are cut
And golden sheaves are bound?

O, tell us, happy New Year,
Will all our friends be true,
And will each cup o'erflow with joy
Unmixed with taste of rue?
Will every heart be joyful,
And every eye be bright,
With not a single tear to dim
The luster of their sight?

"Ah, no," the New Year answered,
"Such gifts I promise not,
For joy and sorrow mingled
Must be each mortal's lot.
But if you heed them rightly—
Life's clouds and thorns and tears—
Then not a single vain regret
Will mar your future years!"

◆

AWARD OF $1,000.00 IN CASH PRIZES FOR PRIZE STORY.

We have received over one hundred thousand answers from contestants for this cash prize, and are surprised at the number of good ones. Great care will be taken to sift them, in order that justice may be done to all.

We had hoped to announce the winners this week, but it is simply impossible to do so. The letters have been gone over once, and all who did not give the thief and murderer aright have been thrown out, but thousands and thousands remain. The Prize Story Editor has been working nights in order to award the prizes as soon as possible, but he must work slowly, as he must necessarily exercise very careful judgment.

When the Editors of the *Ledger* offered this prize, they did not intend that it should be a guessing match, but on the contrary, an award to be made on merit. Many readers have guessed the thief and murderer correctly, but have given no reasons to show that they had any knowledge of the true solution of the mystery. The awards will be given in accordance with the terms of our advertisement, for the best thirty-six solutions. We regret that in this contest, where there have been so many contestants, it will be possible to reward only thirty-six.

We hope to make the awards next week or the week following. When we do so, we will publish the names and addresses of all winners. We feel quite safe in promising our readers that the award will be made in next week's *Ledger*.

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NOTICE TO OLD SUBSCRIBERS.

Watch the yellow label on the wrapper of your *Ledger*, as the date printed on it indicates the time your subscription expires. We will discontinue sending the *Ledger* at the expiration of your subscription. If you renew promptly you will not only insure your *Ledger* coming to you every week without delay, but it will be a great convenience and assistance to the publishers of the *Ledger* in keeping their subscription list.

THE NEW YEAR'S GREETING.

The first observation natural to an American in the opening days of 1896 is a thankful sense of relief that, as a nation, we are at peace the world over. During the defunct year war-clouds overshadowed the far East, and to-day the fate of the Ottoman Empire trembles in the balance. Owing to the intelligent diplomacy of the Hon. JOHN W. FOSTER, China has settled her disastrous war with Japan.

With us the profound peace of thirty years remains unbroken. And one earnest hope for the year now begun is that we shall be permitted to remain in our own place and do our own work without any interference from without.

The new year finds us the most powerful Republic known to history, with one mastering ambition, and that to increase the true prosperity of our citizenship and the perpetuity of our institutions by the avoidance of immense armaments and armies, and by bettering all the conditions which govern life, its industries and its commerce.

Not that this pacific utterance means peace at any price. A New Year's greeting which did not mention and rejoice over honorable peace would be an anomaly indeed. But it is, and must remain, peace with honor and not at any price or forfeiture of our truly vested rights as a people.

So much one can say without trespassing beyond the bounds of prudence. The heedless pratings of war by effusive and would-be-statesmanlike politicians need not disturb the tax-payers' rest in this first month of 1896, or any month that follows it.

The calm level of public opinion prevalent among our people is the true safeguard of the Nation's honor and integrity.

> "Strong, without rage,
> Without o'erflowing, full,"

Columbia, peerless and beautiful, faces the future undisturbed.

It is a genuine cause for congratulation that we have more thoughtful manhood in America in 1896 than we had in 1895, or any previous year of our life. Thousands of the educated sons and daughters of parents leave our schools and colleges each year to join the aggressive ranks of public life and to adorn the homes of the nation.

The new year brings with it new problems and many old ones, too. Had we none of these, our activities would degenerate and finally die. An intelligent state or community makes its own problems, and then develops itself by settling them. Heaven help the folk, could they be found, who have settled all things and are fast asleep!

The deep apathy of business has vanished, as we declared it would do a year ago. Stagnant commercial channels have leaped into motion and life. The armies born of calamity and an ardent desire to avoid labor are not marching on to Washington. The statistics furnished us by the courtesy of "Bradstreet's" prove the immense revival of business.

Such is the imperfect retrospect of our national and outside prospects. Personally the *Ledger* takes delight in repeating a wish it has so often uttered that the words have become sacred for the clustering memories around them—"A Happy New Year to you all!"

This may not mean a year without discipline, for life is mixed with pain as well as joy. And pain, sorrow, contemplation forced upon one by stern methods, often form the school divine in which we gain the strength for worthier character and nobler life.

But whether life be to you mud or marble, poverty or wealth, life itself can be always made to yield to us the good which outweighs the evil, the true which ever defeats the false.

◆

LEAVES OF THE LOTOS.

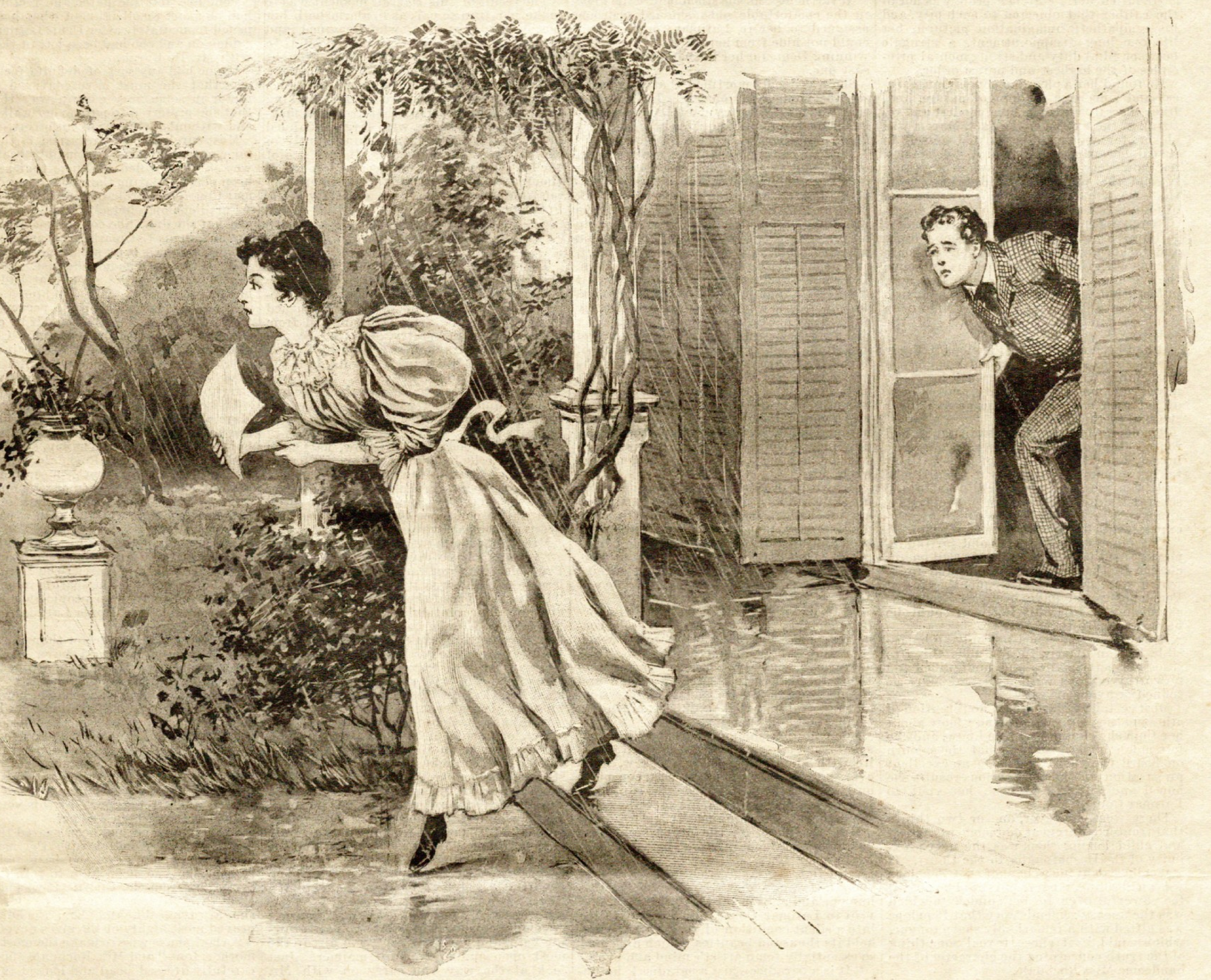
BY DAVID BANKS SICKLES. 12mo. Cloth, gilt top, price, $1.00. J. Selwin Tait & Sons, Publishers.

This is a very attractive book. The binding is in black and yellow silk cloth, decorated with gold stamps of the lotos flower and the white elephant of Siam. The author was for a number of years American Minister at the Court of Siam, and received a decoration from the Emperor, and some of the poems are evidently the fruit of his leisure hours while in the diplomatic service in that country. Many of the poems have an Oriental flavor, and some are inspired by the Hindoo religion and mythology. But these are supplemented by others that are purely Western in feeling and inspiration. The book contains many illustrations of the author's delightful vein of sentiment and reflection. The poems indicate a generous culture and a decided faculty for verse.

◆

THE NEW YORK LEDGER FREE.

We want a bright boy or girl to act as our agent in every city or town in the country. If there is no agent in your town, read our offer on page 19, and get the *New York Ledger* free. See also how your young friend can get a watch free.



OPENING THE LONG WINDOW, PENELOPE SLIPPED OUT INTO THE WET GARDEN.

WILLFUL PENELOPE.*

BY EFFIE ADELAIDE ROWLANDS,

Author of "A Conqueror of Fate," "Little Kit," "At a Great Cost," etc.

["WILLFUL PENELOPE" was commenced in No. 48. Back numbers of the *Ledger*, containing the opening chapters of this story, can be obtained of all Newsdealers. *Even if the Newsdealer is out of back numbers, he will order them for you, if you request him to do so.*]

SYNOPSIS OF PREVIOUS INSTALLMENTS.

[At the hotel of a small coast village, in England, Denis Latimar, a wealthy young heir, and Penelope Desborough, an interesting young lady, meet for the first time since their childhood. He had arrived on his yacht a week before, telling Penelope's mother, the widow of a curate, that he would remain for only a few days, but he found Penelope grown to such beautiful young womanhood that he had prolonged his stay. Penelope, however, manifests at times such spirited pettishness and saucy willfulness that his love suffers an eclipse, and he wishes he had never seen her. His mother, recently deceased (his father having died years before), and Mrs. Desborough, who is an invalid, had been close friends and neighbors in Stevenstone, and Mrs Desborough had always been fond of Denis. Mrs. Julia Rochdale, Penelope's aunt, is also fond of him, but for the same reason that ambitious mothers with marriageable daughters are fond of him, and she has such a daughter—the handsome Marcia. Penelope thinks that to hear Aunt Julia talk one would think her mother had committed a crime when she married a poor curate instead of a rich banker like Mr. Rochdale. Cousin Marcia had so often sung the praises of Denis that Penelope almost hated his name, since his big fortune was the occasion of so much folly, and she thinks Marcia must have been jealous of her when she told her (Penelope) not to set her cap for Denis, for she would only waste her time. Penelope's pride had revolted when she learned that it was at Denis's invitation and expense that they went to the seaside hotel at Waveton, and she had induced her elder sister Lucie to inform him that they would accept his kindness for their mother but not for themselves. Although her heart went out to Denis at first sight, Penelope wants to show him that she is not to be classed with those who are attracted by his wealth; and, besides, she fears the bitter taunts of Marcia were she to give way to her feelings. She now feels that if Denis has ever taken any interest in herself—and she thinks he did at first—she has effectually destroyed it by her petulant conduct. When she hears him tell her mother that he has just received a telegram and shall be off on the morrow her hands tremble and the color leaves her face. But her pride conquers, and when she hears his footsteps she hastily produces a false glow upon her cheeks by rubbing them with a rough towel. In her sprightly way, she continues her rôle of deceiving Denis as to her real character and disposition so successfully that his hope of having misjudged her is completely dashed, and, heavy-hearted and depressed, he departs for London. Here he accidentally meets Mrs. Rochdale and Marcia, when the latter at once notices that a change has come over him, and she wonders, with a shock, whether he has fallen in love. Though he has no liking for either of these ladies, both being consummate actresses, he experiences a feeling of sympathy for the handsome Marcia for having such a worldly-minded mother, and to divert his mind from thought of Penelope he invites them to a cruise on his yacht. Marcia is not so glad over this invitation as she would be if this change had not come over Denis.

Penelope regrets her treatment of Denis and fears that she has marred his future. Lucie Desborough and Walter Collier, her lover, who has fallen heir to a small fortune, are preparing for their wedding. Mr. De Burgh, the young Rector of Stevenstone, secretly loves Penelope and cherishes the hope of winning her for his wife. She calls him a bogy, because he "stalks like a ghost." The rector saves her from falling into a ditch as she is following a squirrel, and while he is still holding her in his arms Denis comes riding along on horseback. He misinterprets the situation, and Penelope, pale and red by turns, is anxious to vindicate herself; but his look of scorn rouses her pride, and her saucy words and laughter ring in his ears as he rides away.]

CHAPTER IX.

MARCIA ROCHDALE was not altogether a stranger to Latimar Court and its environments. She had in truth made a careful study in every way of this fine old English house. The Court was one of the most perfect pieces of ancient architecture extant. Its history was inscribed not only in local guide-books but in several compilations dedicated to the study of such matters.

From these and from other sources, also from remembrance arising from a visit paid to her aunt, Mrs. Desborough, years before, when she had been a very little girl and Penelope a baby, Miss Rochdale considered herself pretty well acquainted with Denis Latimar's house and possessions. But despite all this, and her practical assurance of its extent and value, the beauty of the place came upon her with convincing force as she drove up to the curious old entrance in the luxurious carriage that had been sent to meet her mother and herself at the little railway station.

She felt a thrill of excitement and eagerness pass through her as she alighted and received a most gracefully-worded welcome from the owner of Latimar Court, who stood bareheaded to greet his guests under the stone archway as the carriage drew up.

Her ambition deepened and intensified a hundredfold in this moment. Denis Latimar had always seemed a desirable "future" for her. During the past few weeks she had realized this fact more surely each day, but not until she stood on the threshold of his home and took in the absolute meaning of his position did she understand to the very fullest extent how much a part of herself and her life had this ambitious dream become.

As she followed her mother and Denis through the old hall that was part of the most ancient portion of the building, flagged with stone pavement, over which dim-hued rugs were flung, and across which the light fell in broad, colored patches from the quaint, narrow stained-glass windows, Marcia felt as though something of a queen's position must fall to the lot of the woman who called Latimar Court her home.

There was a regal air about everything. It was not like a modern house. She had stayed in many a country mansion where luxury was found in every corner, but she had never before been in such a house as Latimar Court.

To Penelope's poetic, imaginative mind this old hall with its curious stone arches, its rugged walls and hanging weapons of quaint shape and very old date was in itself a dream of the past.

She loved to sit in one of the big chairs and conjure up a scene of the dead and gone years, knights in clanking armor, beautiful women in picture dresses, fair-haired pages, a cowled monk, maybe, or a gentle-faced nun. Many a little drama had the girl woven out of the treasures of her mind as she sat in the silent old hall and watched the colored shadows lengthen and shift on the rough pavement.

Marcia's thoughts, however, were not of the past, but of the future. They were not thoughts of poetic fancy, but of society, of success, of the triumph of the world. She saw herself passing through the dozens of servants clad in the Latimar livery of black and silver, not as a girl guest following meekly in her mother's train, but as mistress, holding her head high and sweeping through the hall, and up and down the broad, black, oaken staircase as undisputed sovereign of all. She saw herself in a dozen different pictures, each full of satisfactory points.

Her face wore a concentrated, thoughtful air as these dreams framed themselves in her mind, and Denis, turning once to speak to her, was gratified by the expression on her handsome features.

"You like my home, Miss Rochdale?" he said, involuntarily, smiling at her out of those eyes that never left poor little Penelope's memory.

Marcia looked up at him.

"Yes!" was all she said, but she managed to convey an intensity of meaning in the word.

The grave, almost taciturn manner she adopted was very successful with Denis, coming as it did with so much contrast after her mother's liberal flow of ejaculations and exclamations and infantile screams of delight, or fear, or any other passing emotion.

Having his own opinion about Marcia (which opinion she, most astute young woman, had most cleverly and carefully planted in his breast), Denis was always touched by the girl's quiet, silent manner.

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He pitied her. Marcia's pride was not of the caliber that objected to such pity, and his sympathetic imagination pictured her life one long disappointment, a struggle between filial duty and strong mental principles of the highest and purest order.

He found her a pleasant companion, earnest and sincere, a student of nature, and, like all really clever people, modest and retiring in the extreme. In fact, Marcia was clever, for she never permitted herself to reveal her mental and moral deficiencies, nor how very little she knew of anything beyond the practical worldly knowledge that two added to two would make the sum of four.

By much diplomacy and tact she managed to impress not only Denis but her mother and father and several of her intimate friends with the idea that she was far above the average young woman of the day, and, in fact, that she even might, at some future period, take high rank among the deep thinkers and intellectual workers of the century.

It had been reserved for Penelope to know her cousin as she really was. Clever as she was, Marcia was not proof against the weaknesses common to all humanity, and jealousy of her own sex was the one great danger she had to guard against.

Penelope's face, in the first instance, had roused this demon jealousy in Marcia's breast, and then the fact of Mr. Latimar taking so much trouble about the girl who had been his mother's godchild as to call several times on the chance of seeing her, annoyed Miss Rochdale into almost openly-expressed dislike for her country cousin.

The offensive little sneers and jarring remarks anent poor girls and their still poorer chance in the world of fashion and rank, which were directed so frequently against Penelope, would have been a tremendous astonishment to Denis Latimar could he have overheard them.

It would have seemed not only an impossible but an utterly incongruous thing to associate petty malice and undignified and unworthy actions with a girl of Marcia's refined, grave bearing.

Most certainly Marcia had no intention of allowing the young man to know more about her than she chose to let him know, and she felt much inward elation that the sojourn on board the yacht had been an excellent preparation for the more serious results she hoped and anticipated from her visit to Latimar Court.

There were, however, one or two things that troubled Marcia at odd moments. First and chief among them was the near proximity of the Desboroughs to the Court. It was no use denying to herself that Penelope was an absolute danger, and could be a rival too powerful even for her; added to which was the uneasy remembrance that Penelope was gifted with a remarkably sharp tongue, which could, if it chose, reveal something of the truth concerning the character of the handsome Miss Rochdale.

These were things Marcia had remembered and acknowledged clearly when the idea of a stay at Latimar Court was first suggested, and she was prepared to experience some annoyance from the presence of her cousin Penelope.

But the difficulty here was not so much a trouble to Marcia as the knowledge that there was something very wrong with Denis Latimar, at least that there was a great change in the young man of a subtle yet very definite character, making her chance of winning him far more difficult and hard than it would have been a couple of months previously.

Marcia had watched her host as carefully and stealthily as a cat watches a mouse, and though the fact was mortifying to her vanity, she was compelled to admit that it was more than evident that the cause of Latimar's changed manner and looks arose from some trouble of the heart—some disappointment and sorrow that was of recent date. She tried very hard to gather some clue to the matter, but, despite all her efforts, up to the present she had not succeeded.

His secret, whatever it was, belonged to Denis himself; and though he was kindness itself, sympathetic, courteous to a degree, Marcia felt that his efforts to interest and amuse his guests were efforts in truth and in deed, and that though he laughed and talked and seemed as bright and genial as usual, his real self never mingled with these moods, and he lived apart, veiled about in his memories and his regrets.

Marcia's jealousy, that needed so little to be roused, was, of course, fired against the unknown woman who held so much power over the man she desired. No thought of connecting Penelope with this mysterious and dangerous rival—for Marcia knew well that a sentiment is sometimes even more powerful than a reality—entered Miss Rochdale's thoughts or calculations.

Denis had said nothing about that visit of his to Waveton; it was not necessary; it saved him from the discomfort of discussing a period which was full of pain to him.

He had mentioned in the most casual way that he had seen Miss Desborough and her daughters, and the mention had been made so naturally and easily that Marcia's keen ears could detect nothing, and her spirits revived at the apparent indifference to Penelope's fresh young beauty conveyed in the speech.

"Did you see both my cousins?" she had asked in a casual sort of way, but waiting eagerly for the reply; and as Denis answered, "Yes, both," she felt immediately relieved.

Nevertheless, as she stood before the glass in the comfortable old-fashioned bedroom assigned to her in Latimar Court, Marcia could not hide from herself that the task of winning Denis for her husband would be no easy one.

She was deeply mortified that he seemed so impervious to her charms. He liked her, that was more than evident, but he was by no means fascinated, nor was he in the very least inclined to fall in love with her.

She had one good chance, a stronger one, indeed, now that this change had come over him, than before when he had been so palpably heart-whole, and that was to work her way into his sympathies, as she felt she was doing very slowly, and, by appealing to his friendship and interest, render her own influence at first a pleasure and comfort, and at last absolutely indispensable to him. The worst of such a programme was that it would need time and patience, and Marcia desired to grasp her ambition immediately and realize her dream without delay.

She made herself very picturesque, and looked her best on this the first evening of her visit at Latimar Court. The rest of the guests were to follow in the course of the next four days. One other stranger only was present besides the Rochdales, and this was a young Irishman, heir to a very poor baronetcy, and blessed with an exceedingly ugly face, a wonderful flow of spirits, much wit and no money, and a touch of genius in his hands.

He was by profession a civil engineer, and his skill would have been marvelously successful had it been tempered with more perseverance, tact and thought, and had he been able to refrain from using his pen or pencil to caricature everything about him, from his dearest friend to his worst enemy; for, as it was, with all his cleverness he was a failure.

Denis had a great affection for Rossmore Bryant; they were, in fact, remotely connected, only becoming acquainted when they were at college together, but there was a warm friendship between them, and Denis did his best to keep his kinsman and chum steady in his life and his profession, an undertaking that required much patience, tact and affection.

The young Irishman, apart from his wild spirits, had a heart of gold and was a favorite with almost everybody. A few, however, and Marcia Rochdale was conspicuously among them, detested him cordially, fearing his sharp tongue, his merciless wit, as much as his cunning pencil.

Mrs. Rochdale, on the other hand, was much entertained always by Rossmore Bryant, or Ross, as he was known generally; but, then, she was not keen-witted enough to recognize the dangers of his humor; and Marcia was. It was Ross's first visit to Latimar Court, and he had fallen into a silent condition of ecstasy as he beheld its thousand beauties, which appealed so essentially to an artist's mind and eye.

"It is a paradise—just a paradise!" he declared, as the four assembled at dinner in one of the smaller rooms, which bore all the traces in its appointments of Mrs. Latimar's refined and exquisise taste. "If I had it, sure I'd never leave it as long as I was born!"

"I expect you will find plenty to admire about the neighborhood, Ross," Denis said, with a faint smile. "There is a curious little bit of a chapel in the grounds which will enchant you; and if you want a real touch of peaceful autumn, you must pay an early visit to Mrs. Desborough at Laburnum Cottage. Her garden is a perfect dream of coloring."

Marcia frowned very slightly, and listened intently. Denis had turned to her mother.

"I tried in vain to induce Mrs. Desborough to join us at dinner to-night," he said, "but it was quite hopeless. I am afraid she was not quite so well this evening. Your niece told me she had been compelled to lie down all day. The excitement of the wedding is too much for her, no doubt."

"Your niece!" Marcia set her teeth. "Which niece?"

A curious, subtle feeling crept over her that Denis's voice and manner were very studied when he spoke of the Desboroughs. She looked across at him and smiled faintly.

"Poor Aunt Marian! I feel so sorry for her; it must be a wrench losing Lucie. They have been together so much; and though Pen is a dear, lovable little thing, she will not be the same as Lucie. By the way, Mr. Latimar, you have never told us what you think of little Penelope. Isn't she pretty?"

Mrs. Rochdale glanced up from the dainty morsel on her plate to look at her daughter. There was a ring of such sincere admiration in Marcia's voice, and her face wore such a warm look as of affectionate pride, that Mrs. Rochdale, *mondaine* as she was, felt how infinitely inferior she was to her daughter.

"She is marvelous—marvelous," she said to herself. "She will succeed, and she deserves to."

Denis had been preparing himself for some such speech, and he felt almost something like pride in himself as an actor as he answered Marcia, assenting to Miss Rochdale's criticism of her cousin warmly, and yet endeavoring to convey an impression of something like indifference with his admiration. He little knew the effect of his acting. Everything about him betrayed that his assumption of indifference *was* assumption: and Marcia felt a hot rush of jealousy through her veins, so sharp, so furious and so venomous, that for the moment she could have flung her self-constraint and self-control to the winds, and have screamed out her hatred of Penelope in no measured words.

The result of this *mauvais* moment was to make her turn so pale as to alarm both her mother and her host, who imagined and feared she was going to faint, The effort to recover herself and reassure them brought back her color, and by and by, murmuring an excuse of extreme fatigue and headache, Marcia left the dining-room, and making her way to an opening that led to a magnificent conservatory, with large, soft-hued lamps and a fountain splashing gently in the distance, she flung herself into one of the luxurious chairs and became lost in her thoughts, which were disturbed, angry and miserable, and all because of pretty little Penelope. Poor Penelope!

CHAPTER X.

The wedding was over. The wild rush and bustle of excitement had fled from the cottage. The wild-flowers that had decorated the church had faded and turned brown, the tear-stains had vanished from Mrs. Desborough's pretty, delicate face, and the void and strangeness caused by Lucie's absence were becoming recognized slowly but not unhappily.

It was a week since the day the bride had left the quiet home where her gentle, uneventful life had been passed. It was pouring with rain.

Penelope stood at the window, flattening her nose as she had done that bygone day at Waveton. Outside the rain fell in a steady downpour, beating the faded, frail leaves from the trees, and sending them to swell their fallen comrades lying in little sodden heaps on the pathway.

Mrs. Desborough sat by the fire writing.

"I think I have given her all the news, Pen," she said, breaking the silence. Needless to say she was writing to her Lucie. "I have told her of the doings at the Court, and how your aunt Julia has been to see me twice, how Marcia has been many times, how very much I think she has grown, how Denis wants me to go abroad for the winter, and says he will travel with me and take care of me if I will go to Mentone. How good he is! How I wish his mother could know of his tenderness to me!"

"Perhaps she does know it, darling."

Penelope spoke in a slow, dreamy way, her eyes fixed on the dripping trees outside, whose branches were already almost stripped and empty.

"When one is old and always sick," Mrs. Desborough said, in her gentle, feeble voice, "it is wonderfully pleasant to be remembered, and it is not often one finds a young man so full of thought as Denis Latimar—is it, Pen, my darling?"

Penelope turned from the window; she had stifled a sigh in her throat and a pain like a knife in her heart.

"Mumsey," she said, gravely, "you are developing a shocking habit—you are growing vain, and you flirt. Yes, you flirt in the most open and disgraceful manner. Just look at the way you carry on with Mr. Bryant. It is positively appalling!"

Mrs. Desborough laughed.

"Mr. Bryant does come, certainly, very often."

"So you own your guilt!" cried Penelope, kneeling down in front of the fire, and frowning in mock tragic fashion at her mother's face, that seemed to grow more wan and delicate every hour. "Abandoned woman, I blush for you!"

Mrs. Desborough's hand rested on the dark, ruffled locks, and Penelope drew it down to her lips and kissed it tenderly. Then she leaned back and rested against her mother's chair, and in that manner, her face being hidden, she let the forced smile die from her lips and the forced expression fade from out her eyes.

This burden of being perpetually gay, always merry, always full of laughter and joke, was something almost terrible to her. If it had not been for her mother and her pride, there were times when Penelope could have flung herself face downward on the ground and groaned out the sorrow and tribulation of her heart.

How little she had imagined the result of her girlish recklessness and pride! At what a cost had she not wantonly cut herself adrift from anchorage! And the worst of it all was that the realization of what she had done had brought her no satisfaction, no triumph, only pain and humiliation and trouble almost greater than she could bear, the hardest being the misery of acting a part in her daily life—of having to seem to be just that which, alas! she felt she should never be again.

The last week had been the longest, the most miserable Penelope had ever known. Up to the time of Lucie's marriage there had been so much excitement, so much to do, she had been carried along almost unconsciously.

She had not had even time to remember; but now all was over. Lucie was gone. The house was itself again.

Ah! now was the moment when remembrance became an hourly torture. That day in the lane—would she ever forget it? How Denis had looked at her! The girl's face scorched with sudden shame. And what—what must he have thought?

A quiver of angry, unreasoning indignation ran through her against Harold De Burgh. Why should he have seized her in that ridiculous way? Far, far better would it have been to have let her slip and roll in the muddy ditch. Anything—mud, water, anything—would have been better than to have been seen by Denis Latimar clasped in a man's embrace.

Penelope felt she hated the rector. She had no exact recollection of what had happened immediately after Denis Latimar had ridden on and she had been left in the lane with Mr. De Burgh.

If she had any sort of definite feeling, it was that she must have conveyed to the rector in some very certain way the fact that she preferred to pursue her walk alone and without the honor of his escort.

Most surely she had returned to the Cottage very late, and her muddy boots and wet skirts testified to Lucie that she had been perambulating the woods beyond Latimar Court, and probably the fields, too.

For Penelope herself had no memory of what she did. She could remember nothing but Denis Latimar's face, and his contemptuous eyes bent so sternly upon her, and then averted as he rode past. And since that day, during the week that had gone, how many times she had seen him!

It seemed as though some perverse fate willed that they should meet. If by chance she knew he was coming to the Cottage and she avoided him, of a certainty she would come face to face with him in the road beyond or in the narrow village street.

Twice she had seen him riding with Marcia back from a short, sharp run with the Latimar foxhounds, splashed with mud, but evidently perfectly happy, speaking to and listening to Miss Rochdale with an interest that, to Penelope's miserable eyes, partook of eagerness, even of reverence.

She had met him driving one afternoon, and another time walking with a party of his guests.

She could not escape him, and this fact entailed an intense exertion on her part. She must never be unprepared; the smile must ever be on her lips, the sparkle in her eyes. She had to deceive two people—her mother because of her love, Denis Latimar because of her pride.

She succeeded far better than she knew. Mrs. Desborough would have exclaimed with amazement had any one questioned the reality of her baby's happiness. Penelope happy! Did not the echo of her laughter proclaim the fact? Did not her lovely, smiling face bear witness to the contentment that filled her young heart? Penelope was as happy as the day was long—so her mother imagined in her loving ignorance; and so Denis Latimar imagined in his jealous blindness and hot, angry contempt, which was nursed and strengthened by this very semblance of that which was not.

So far Penelope had been spared the suffering of close contact with the man she loved so deeply. For the best and only reason, she had been able to refuse every invitation from the Court. It was not possible to leave her mother. That was what she always said, and Mrs. Rochdale approved most highly of the girl's devotion.

"Alas! she is wise to make the most of her mother, for—" and Mrs. Rochdale shook her carefully dressed head and looked as sad as she knew how. Despite this prognostication of evil and the thought of the probable speedy death of her invalid sister, Mrs. Rochdale was content to leave that sister very much alone. On the other hand, Marcia, in a purposely quiet, unostentatious manner, seemed to be perpetually paying a visit to her aunt. She always managed, in her own peculiar fashion, to make herself so disagreeable to Penelope, unseen by Mrs. Desborough, and, indeed, in so indefinite and roundabout a way as scarcely to be fully comprehended by Penelope, that our heroine on nearly every occasion managed to slip away and leave Miss Rochdale in undisputed possession of the invalid for the period of her visit.

Penelope never guessed what construction Marcia managed to convey to Denis Latimar on these absences.

"I have been sitting with poor Aunt Marian," she would say to him after one of her excursions to Laburnum Cottage. "I read to her for a little while. How patient she is! It must be so desolate sitting there for hours together by herself."

And Denis's anger and disgust at Penelope's heartlessness and selfishness would rise anew at this evidence of her neglect of one who gave her such adoring love. Nevertheless, though he judged her so harshly himself, he could not endure to hear her judged by others, She was so much a part of his heart, so intensely, hopelessly dear to him.

"She is only a child," he said once to Marcia, "and some allowance must be made for her. She loves pleasure and sunshine, and it is hard that a child should be shut perpetually in a sick-room. I am sure it is her mother who insists on her going out so frequently."

Marcia smiled faintly as he said this.

"Of course, I agree with you in part," she answered, in the thoughtful, earnest manner that always impressed him. "Still," with a reluctant sort of pause, "I like to see the evidence of some real love and unselfishness even in a child, and dear, pretty butterfly little Pen seems, alas! to be devoid of all deep, true feeling. I hope, Mr. Latimar, you do not think me unkind for saying a thing of this sort. I am only so very, very sorry for poor Aunt Marian, and I am so much older than Penelope that I may be forgiven for criticising her character, for I know a little of the world, and I fear she will not rise above the world; and it grieves me."

Denis, sore-hearted, winced even while he acknowledged the truth of what she said. Did he not know how true it was? Butterfly Penelope! Yes, that was the right word—the only one; and yet what a lovely, dainty, maidenly, fascinating butterfly she was, and how cruel it was that such deep, true eyes should give such a false message to a man's heart!

Marcia had arrived at one conclusion, and it was by no means an agreeable one for her to realize.

Denis's strangely altered manner and face were in some mysterious way connected with Penelope Desborough. The thought that he was in love with her cousin protruded itself now and then, but Marcia would not regard it for long, it was such a disagreeable idea; but though she dismissed it as absurd and tried to manufacture another reason, the other reason was not easily forthcoming.

It was little less than horrible to her to think that Penelope, whom she hated so much, should, after all, have obtained more power over Denis than she could ever hope to get. But what was the truth of the matter? There was the puzzle. If Denis had made love to Penelope, there could never, of course, be a moment's doubt that the girl would have responded only too joyfully. No, he had not made love to her; Penelope's manner betrayed that. Had there even been a moment of folly, a country nobody like this girl would, of course, not have failed to make the most of that moment; but it was only too clear that so far as Penelope was concerned, Denis was perfectly free.

The girl, in fact, was too fond of flirtation and fun to think of more serious matters. Perhaps she did not even know whether Denis Latimar admired her; and he did admire Penelope—there was on that point no doubt at all. Then, if he admired her, what was wrong? Marcia could see no light in the matter; nothing except that for some strange reason Denis Latimar was by no means happy; that for a still more strange and incomprehensible reason his unhappiness seemed to be connected with Penelope; and that Penelope appeared, and undoubtedly was, quite unaware of this fact. Out of much discomfort, however, Marcia had gleams of comfort and strong flashes of hope. Her *rôle*, played to perfection, was succeeding beyond her imagination.

Denis seemed to find his keenest interest and pleasure when with her. He began discussing broader matters with her by slow degrees. He asked her advice on odds and ends of things. She rode with him one day and surveyed some distant land on which he desired to build a hospital. Another time she had to give her advice about some farms. In a dozen small, indirect ways Denis and Marcia had become allied. And he was quite unconscious of this net she was weaving about him. He remembered nothing but that Marcia was a quiet, refined, charming woman, a real companion, a thoughtful adviser, a woman with brains as well as a heart. He had no feeling save the warmest friendship—the deepest friendly sympathy for her and with her.

In love with Marcia Rochdale! Why, Denis would have shouted almost with laughter at the mere suggestion. In love with Marcia! Ah, no, no! Never in love with any other but that dainty, bewitching, soulless will-o'-the-wisp who maddened and infatuated him even while he knew the empty folly of his love.

In love with Marcia Rochdale! Well was it for Marcia's schemes that no living soul breathed a hint of such a possibility to Denis Latimar. There would have been a speedy end to everything, to the friendship, the alliance of mutual sympathy, the interest, the pleasant companionship. But as no one spoke, Denis lived on in his blindness, and his fate rolled slowly and slowly, yet none the less surely, to his feet. Penelope thought of nothing else but this marriage; she expected the announcement every day, and as the time passed she sighed with miserable impatience that the news did not arrive. She dreaded yet longed to know that the end had come.

She was thinking of it now as she sat leaning against her mother's chair, gazing into the glowing coals; and then somehow the red caverns of the fire grew blurred, her eyes closed, her senses faded, and her thoughts became confused dreams.

She had not passed a whole night in sleep since that parting at Waveton. She did not know even herself how great was the strain on her nervous system, how weary she was growing of it all. She woke to consciousness by and by, and as she rubbed her eyes she heard a merry Irish voice whispering audibly to her mother. In a moment she was on her feet.

"Oh, mumsey, why didn't you wake me?" she cried reproachfully, as she shook hands with Rossmore Bryant.

"Sure, and it was I myself that wouldn't let her. And I've took the most exquisite jewel of a picture, haven't I, Mrs. Desborough—'The Sleeping Princess?' I'll be giving it to Denis, and he'll have it framed and—"

Penelope grew very pale.

"Let me look, may I?" she asked, outwardly calm, but inwardly eager and hotly angry.

"Ah, now, I know you!" cried Ross, cautiously, retreating with the picture carefully behind his back. "I can see it in your eye. You mean my sketch is no good. Confess, Miss Penelope?"

Penelope held out her hand.

"I want to see myself asleep," she said, with a laugh; but her heart was beating wildly.

What if he were to do this? What if he were to carry this sketch of her up to the Court? If Denis knew that she had lain sleeping on the rug while Ross Bryant had sketched her, what would he not think—how would he not judge her? Oh, surely, she had a burden heavy enough to bear of his contempt and disgust already. And if he were not predisposed to judge her, Marcia would not fail to make the worst of what under ordinary circumstances would have been a simple joke. Troubled, oppressed by her unhappiness, by the never-fading memory of Denis's contempt, the girl shrank from incurring further scorn. She knew intuitively this was something Denis would condemn.

Ross looked at her with a curious touch of pathos on his very ugly face.

"Sure, now, and if you destroy it, I—I'll never forgive you. I have wanted to make a picture of you all this time, and it has been my only chance," he said.

"Then bring it to the window and let me see it. You are a mean man. Fancy refusing to let me see myself!"

Penelope slipped away from the fire as she spoke. Mrs. Desborough looked after them, smiling.

She loved to hear Penelope in this sort of mood. How pretty the child was with her flushed face, big, gleaming eyes, and her pretense of serious anger!

"Let her see it, Mr. Bryant," she said lightly. "It is so good, Pen, darling."

Ross obediently held out his treasure, but not very willingly.

"Now," he began—"I trust to you now."

He got no farther. Opening the long window suddenly, Penelope slipped through it on to the veranda and out into the wet garden. The sketch was crumpled savagely in her hand.

Like lightning Ross leaped after her, only pausing to pull the window after him to shield the invalid. Under the soaked path, the dripping trees, he ran in pursuit of the fleet, graceful form.

To catch up to her was but the work of a moment for him, and then Penelope faced him.

"Mr. Bryant," she said, and her voice was quivering in a curious way, a little suggestive of tears, "I have a favor to ask you. Will you leave this sketch with me, and will you—"

They were close beside the gate. The lane stretched outside, thick with mud. Rain was still falling. It clung in dewdrop fashion to Penelope's ruffled, uncovered head. Her little slipper-shod feet sank into the wet gravel path.

Ross Bryant stood immediately in front of her, his face a mixture of laughter and vexation.

Penelope could not speak very plainly, she had run so fast and was so excited and still angry.

Her heart was beating so furiously it throbbed audibly in her ears. She spoke almost unconsciously. She was so lost in the purport of her words that it was with a great start she turned at a sudden noise, and saw that a phaeton and pair of horses had drawn up at the gate.

A tall, white-mackintoshed figure was driving under the hood, and a smaller, womanly figure beside it. The occupants of this carriage must have witnessed all the wild rush through the garden, the sudden stop, the pleading.

"Penelope!" Marcia's voice came out very clearly in amazed, not to say slightly horror-struck tones. "Penelope—and—and Mr. Bryant!"

"We have been having a paper chase, haven't we, Miss Penelope?" laughed Ross; "and I'm beat. Are you going to get down, Miss Rochdale? Allow me."

He stepped forward to assist her.

"No," Marcia said quickly; "I won't get down now; I only want to leave this book for Aunt Marian. Will you give her my love, Penelope, and say I will see her to-morrow; and do go in, dear, you look so—so wet and uncomfortable standing there."

Penelope stretched out her hand for the book, and took it from Mr. Bryant.

"I will give my mother your message, Marcia," she said, very quietly.

She made no effort to move, but stood boldly in the wet path and waved her hand as the phaeton started.

Denis's two hands tightened on the reins they held, and for a moment the task of managing the two bays, which resented this treatment, relieved the hot rush of jealous anger that filled his veins.

He had not been able to open his lips to speak one word to her, but his face had turned as white as the mackintosh that covered him.

He drove so swiftly through the fast darkening lanes that Marcia, who was not very courageous, gripped the side of the carriage, and wished devoutly she was safe on *terra firma*.

As they drew near the entrance of the Court, Denis slackened his speed. He let his hands fall with the sort of gesture as of one who flings up a project.

Marcia, her fears relieved, glanced at him anxiously. Somehow she knew that her fate as this man's wife was just trembling in the balance. She drew a deep, sharp breath.

She was almost afraid of Denis Latimar as he sat beside her in this moment—stern, quiet, with a face that was ashen white. Her courage sank; she seemed to think that failure was before her, that all her patience, her scheming would be as naught.

And then, suddenly—so suddenly as to be absolutely bewildering in its swiftness—these fears were driven back, and her heart beat wildly; not this time with nervousness and anxiety, but madly, excitedly, with such an excitement as almost rose to pain, and brought a choking sensation in her throat.

The phaeton had been pulled up hurriedly. Denis Latimar turned toward and bent his eyes upon her. His voice was husky, and had a sound in it that spoke of deep emotion. Even in this moment, Marcia's keen discernment could not trace one single sound of affection, of tenderness, of love in his words; and yet they were the words for which she had schemed, for which she had hoped with such fierce hope and desire.

Abruptly, that strange tone in his voice, Denis spoke to the woman beside him.

"Marcia Rochdale," he said, turning his face toward her—"Marcia Rochdale, will you be my wife?"

[TO BE CONTINUED IN OUR NEXT—NO. 1.]

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BIRDS OF THE ROCKIES.

BY OLIVE THORNE MILLER.

The newcomer to the Rockies, if he be a bird lover, finds himself almost in an unknown world. Indeed, the great chain of mountains that forms the backbone of our continent seems to have a peculiar, not to say mysterious, influence upon the life about it, not only upon the people who habitually breathe the air of that region, but upon the birds which are curiously differentiated from their brethren of the East, some of them in habits, but most of them in looks.

Our blessed little chickadee, and that droll fellow, the chat, when they appear in the Rockies, content themselves with adding an extra inch or so to the tail. The common flicker, or yellow hammer, while retaining the habits of his Eastern namesake, wears red instead of gold on his wing linings, and a red mustache instead of the modest black one of our species. The Western bluebird brightens and exaggerates the tender hue of our spring beauty into a coat of greatly increased loveliness; our bluejay is replaced by one of the same saucy manners, but of deeper and richer color; even the robin "suffers a change," and instead of finding his delight in earthworms, turns his attention to beetles and grubs and various winged insects.

The Western wood pewee changes the plaintive but sweet notes we are familiar with into a loud, dismal wail. Lacking the love of solitude that distinguishes our bird, he comes about the houses, and in place of the exquisite lichen-covered saucer we are accustomed to see, builds a deep, substantial nest, decorated with fluffy cotton from the cottonwood tree.

Our joyous goldfinch, in yellow, with black cap and trimmings, is represented in the Rockies by a smaller, livelier and, if possible, more bewitching species, the Arkansas goldfinch. He is one of the daintiest of feathered atoms, clad in olive green, with bright yellow below, black cap, and black and white wings. His common call is an indescribably sweet and plaintive copy of the canary's "s-w-e-e-t," and he is a rapturous singer. A favorite haunt of this bird are the tree-fringed banks of Cheyenne Canyon brook, in Colorado, where he spends most of his time in the tops of the tallest trees, tantalizing the bird-lover by flitting glimpses of his dainty form, and by scraps of song, sometimes a mere single note, shaken out, as it were, in a most enchanting tremolo. The nest of this elusive midget is so carefully hidden that I never found one, though the birds were plentiful about me all nesting time.

Greater variation than any other, perhaps, is found between our meadow lark and his Western congener. Similarly dressed in mottled gray, with yellow breast and black necklace, he wonderfully surpasses our shy singer in musical performances, his tones being loud and ringing, though of a sweet and rich quality that compels the world to listen. His manner of uttering his charming message, too, differs from that of our bird, who perches on a fence or a clod of earth to pour out his delightful minor strain. The Western songster seeks a telegraph pole, the peak of a roof or a tall tree. Our bird, again, keeps away from houses, preferring more retired places to live and nest, while the Rocky Mountain species builds in alfalfa fields in the villages and sings in the streets of the towns. He is the show singer of the mountain regions, and well worth a journey to hear. It is charming to see his devoted attendance upon his mate as she collects the materials and fashions her nest, accompanying her on every trip, perching on a fence to watch for intruders, and cheering her with scraps of song.

One of the most familiar birds about the houses that border the brook already spoken of, after it leaves the narrow mountain walls, a bird which takes the place the robin occupies in the Eastern States, is the chewink or towhee bunting, with velvety black head and back, white breast and bright chestnut sides. His peculiar song, at its best like a peal of silver bells, may be heard from morning till night, and he may often be seen foraging about under the bushes, scratching in the leaves and dirt, or stealing up to the back door where the family dogs have had their breakfast.

The nest of this bird is as hard to find as a bobolink's in a meadow, being a deep cup sunk into the earth, closely hidden under some low bush. The only one I ever had the good fortune to see in the Rockies was in the Wasatch Range, in a great patch of sage brush, where each bush was the exact copy of every other bush, and nests were almost impossible to find. The chewink himself announced the presence of a nest by alighting on a low tree with a worm in his mouth, and uttering a cry of distress or dismay on seeing me. He might as well have put out a sign at once, and I was instantly alert to see his mate. In a moment I noticed her skulking away from behind me, evidently trying to avoid observation. Following up this clue, I soon found the little home under the lowest branch of a sage bush, and so near it that I wondered the mother could get in.

The nest was full of little folk, packed like sardines in a box and perfectly quiet. I went every day to look at them, saw them as they grew and took on their feathers, but they were always the same silent, sleepy little creatures, and on the eighth day of my watching, and perhaps the ninth or tenth of their lives, they were gone, and it was useless to seek them in the wilderness of sage brush that covered half the mountainside.

Besides these birds, all of which have near relations in the Eastern States, the Rockies have their own exclusive bird, one never found far from the cool and sparkling streams that rush and tumble down the canyons—the American dipper or water ouzel.

The water ouzel is a bird of great interest from the peculiarity of his habits and his cheerful, winning ways. Hatched in a snug, covered nest of moss, on a rocky ledge where the spray from a waterfall keeps it ever fresh and green, he is rarely if ever in his life out of hearing of the music of running and falling water.

No bird on earth, not even of the distinctively water birds, is more inseparable from water than this one, which is at the same time strictly terrestrial in structure. He nests beside it, often behind or under the sprinkle of a fall; he gets all his food from it, generally on the bed of a stream; he is an expert diver, and able to walk and even to fly under the swift-running water of a mountain brook, and, it is said, he never flies away from his chosen stream, but follows its windings in the air not far above it.

The ouzel is about the size of a robin, with a shorter tail, which gives him a "chunky" look. He is clad in almost uniform dark-grayish slate-color, and has conspicuous white eyelids. His feathers are thick and impervious to water, and he comes up out of his bath with none of the draggled look one would expect, and, without even a shake of plumage, looks as dry as if he had not been in.

He is a wonderful singer, not only in the quality of his music, which is "that of the stream refined and spiritualized," but in his persistence in singing the year round, as cheerful when the blizzards of winter chill other birds and drive them shivering into the warmest shelter they can find, or when the dusty heat of summer dries the songs in their parched throats, as they are in the brilliant, blooming spring.

In the neighborhood of the ouzel may often be seen a Western representative of the wren family, one of the most individual, self-assertive and aggressive, as well as interesting, of our bird tribes. Rarely exceeding six inches in length, and dressed in obscure brown, speckled and mottled and barred all over, nesting low, and going about always near the ground, this family yet has the honor of producing some of our most glorious songsters. They are well represented by this mountain dweller, the canyon wren, which adds to the modest dress of the family a conspicuous white throat, and reduces the exuberant, gushing song to a simple chromatic run of nine notes, yet of such exquisite tone and inflection that it is one of the most charming of songs.

This wren nests in crevices in the rocky sides of the canyon, and when the dumpy brown babies come out upon their own doorstep to look abroad on the world, they find before them a sheer precipice to the rushing and foaming brook below, behind them the perpendicular rock to unknown height, and above them the wonderful blue sky of Colorado.

◆

—We should enjoy our fortune as we do our health—enjoy it when good, be patient when it is bad, and never apply violent remedies except in an extreme necessity.

You don't know

where you got that cold. Do you know where you can get the cure for it? Every drug store keeps **Ayer's Cherry Pectoral.**

It cures coughs and colds.

CHILDREN ALL OVER THE WORLD.

Such a Careful Boy!

Mrs. Barker looked at the clock and tied on her white apron.

"Now hurry, Billy," she said to her little son; "and be back as soon as you can, and bring those mutton-chops from the butcher's and that milk from old Mrs. Perry's. There is the money for the milk, put in this jacket pocket; and there is the money for the meat in the other. Carry the can carefully."

"Yes, ma'am," said Billy, pulling on his red mittens. "Mamma, *don't* you feel glad you 've got such a smart boy that can go on errands for you and bring things home? Johnny Trimmer's mamma darsn't let him do her errands because he loses the change and breaks the china. He isn't smart like I am. Say, mamma, don't you feel glad Johnny Trimmer isn't your little boy?"

"Certainly I love you better than I love Johnny Trimmer, and I *am* glad you are my little boy," said the mother; "but we should never praise ourselves. We should let others do that."

"Suppose they don't?" said Billy. "Then haven't you *got* to do it yourself, for fear nobody might find out?"

"People will be sure to find out if you are good and smart, Billy," said his mother. "Now run."

She kissed him and went into her kitchen, but in one minute more little brown fingers were tapping at the window-panes, and when she raised the sash, Billy poked in his head.

"Say, mamma," he cried, "if I mayn't say I am good and smart, may I say I am careful? That's a thing I can *do*. If I said I could read it wouldn't be bragging, 'cause I can."

"Well, Billy," said his mother, "I can't see any harm in *saying* you are careful, if you remember always to make it the truth."

"You *bet!*" said Billy, pushing his sailor hat to the back of his head and marching off, a tin kettle in one hand and a basket in the other.

Billy went to the butcher's first and got the chops, and then to the little dairy and set his can on the counter and flourished off the cover.

"A quart of your very best milk, if you please, Mrs. Perry," he said.

Mrs. Perry laughed, and ladled out the milk, and away went Billy with basket and ran again. Only he forgot the tin cover that he had flourished off so elegantly. Old Mrs. Perry hurried to the door and called after him, but Billy did not hear, and he had forgotten that the can ever had a cover. He walked along swinging it, and thinking what a very careful boy he was, until he came to Squire Trueman's gate.

Squire Trueman had very large grounds and there was a garden and a grove and a little lake and a summer-house. And the Squire's little grandson Jeff was driving his goat-wagon.

"Hello!" Jeff cried. "Come in, Billy, and see old Black-Horns! He 's got a new harness with red bells, and he 's been shut up so long that he 's glad to be driven."

Little Jeff had heard something like this said about his father's horse, and thought it sounded very fine, but Black-Horns was not so delighted as the child believed. He would have preferred to be taken out of the traces again and allowed to go into the lot at the back of the garden, where he liked to stay all day eating the big, glossy leaves of what the children called the "bread-and-butter bush," and climbing the rocks, where he used to stand with all four feet together and go "baa-baa-baa" for hours.

"Come in, Billy, and have a ride," said Jeff.

"I 'd like to," said Billy, "but I 've been of an errand for mamma, and I 've got things to take home, and I 'm always *very* careful, you know." But for all that he came in, saying to himself: "One ride won't take long."

Little Jeff had jumped down from his wagon and stood holding the reins, and Billy, setting his basket and can down close to the iron railings, got in and took them. I do not know whether he did anything to make Black-Horns angry, but before he could take his seat, off flew the goat straight across the lawn and through an open gate into the green lot where he was pastured, overturning the wagon and breaking it to pieces and upsetting Billy into a little, muddy pond. Giles Jones, the Squire's hired man, saw it all, and came running to pick Billy out of the mud and unharness Black-Horns.

Jeff began to cry over his broken wagon. Billy looked at his new gray suit and the boots that were so shiny when they left home. His hat he couldn't see at all, but Black-Horns seemed to be enjoying something that he was eating very much, and something red hung out of his mouth. It was the ribbon band of Billy's hat.

"Both of you young gentlemen seem to be unfortunate to-day," said Giles, grinning.

Billy turned away. He wouldn't have had Giles see him cry for the world, and he began to run toward the place where he had left his can and basket. As soon as he drew near it he saw a sight that horrified him. The Squire kept six big dogs, and all these dogs were gathered about the basket, each eating a chop, while the big family cat, Cleopatra, and her four kittens were finishing the milk in the can, which Cleopatra had patted over on its side, in order that her babies might drink more easily.

Billy's mother had waited for her boy so long that she was very anxious when she saw him coming up the lane, covered with mud and hatless, and carrying the empty can and the basket, which held nothing else.

"Oh, Billy! What has happened?" she cried.

"Oh, mother, nothing happened! I was naughty and careless and went and did it myself!" Billy answered. And then he told her the whole story, not trying to make excuses.

"At least I am glad of one thing," said mamma. "I have a little boy who tells the truth." And so she forgave him; but I think little Billy never boasted of his fine qualities again. He did not even say, "I am like George Washington—I never tell a lie."

Correspondence

The Bayeux Tapestry.—Antonia has heard of the Bayeux Tapestry and wishes to know what it is, and why it is celebrated. *Answer:* The following description is from a book on odd and curious things: "The Bayeux Tapestry, which takes its name from the place where it is kept, is a needlework history on canvas. It illustrates the invasion and conquest of England in 1066, and is a marvel of patience and skill. It is said to be the work of Matilda, the wife of William the Conqueror, and the ladies of her court. It was presented by the Queen to the Cathedral of Bayeux, Normandy, as a token of her appreciation of the assistance rendered to her husband by Odo its bishop, at the battle of Hastings. It was for many years the custom to exhibit the tapestry on St. John's Day. It is worked in wool threads of various colors, and contains fifteen hundred and twelve figures. There are six hundred and twenty-three men, five hundred and sixty quadrupeds, birds, sphinxes and otters, two hundred and two horses, thirty-seven buildings, forty-one boats and ships, and forty-nine trees. The web on which the marvelous work is wrought is two hundred and fourteen feet long and twenty inches wide. It shows the history of the Conquest, and is in many particulars more minute than written history. How long it took to complete this tapestry there is nothing to show; but it must have occupied many hands for a period of years.

Farmer's Winter Work.—Farmer's Boy asks if there is not some way to treat garden spots so that there will not be any delay when springtime comes and seeds must be put in the ground for early crops. He has a piece of land that is rather low and a little damp, but is sheltered, and things planted there come up early. How shall he best prepare it for first plantings in the spring? *Answer:* If you were wise enough to fall-plow your garden, there is very much that you can do. With a crowbar turn the clods up on edge, and then throw over them all slops from the house. Cut down all weeds, grass, brush and stalks of plants, gather up leaves, and make a pile of all of these. Pour hot soap-suds over them, and throw any brine or salt you may have to spare upon them. The salt will destroy the vitality of many weed-seeds, and is an excellent ingredient in all fertilizers. When the frost is coming out of the ground spread a thin coating from the pile over the garden, then harrow it thoroughly. If you did not fall-plow, take advantage of the first warm spell, then leave the ground to freeze and thaw, which will disintegrate the soil and leave it soft and friable. Constant attention to the compost heap is one of the prime necessities of a good garden, and into it all waste substances of all sorts should be put.

Children's Home.—Ella would like to start a home where children could be cared for, such children as cannot receive sufficient care from their parents. She would like to keep a place in a very excellent sort of way and wants information as to the best methods. *Answer:* The laws in regard to caring for children are so strict and there are so many possibilities of trouble and annoyance about the business that the *Ledger's* advice is: Study the matter thoroughly before entering upon it. If some one became offended at you there would be no end of vexatious things that could be said and done. The country is full of schools and academies where children are sent and where they can remain during vacation. Infants and very small children are often ill and die, and caretakers are charged with neglect and carelessness. It would certainly be a most excellent thing if there could be good homes provided for little ones.

Whig and Tory.—High School Boy asks the origin and meaning of the names Whig and Tory. *Answer:* There are several theories or statements on the origin of the name Whig. One declares that it comes from Scotch cattle-drovers, who are called "Whiggamoors"—"Whig," for short. Another, and probably the correct one, is that the word was formed of the initial letters of the motto of the Liberals in Cromwell's time, which was "We Hope In God." The name Tory is from the Gaelic words "Tor a ki," pronounced "Tory," and meaning "Come, O King." These words were constantly shouted by Royalists, and soon grew to be used as a name by which to designate them.

According to Hoyle.—Edward R. asks the origin of the expression, "According to Hoyle," and what it means. *Answer:* In 1743 Edmund Hoyle, then a government officer in Ireland, published a treatise on whist, which was accepted as authority. He had taken great interest in the game, and taught it to many persons. He is credited with bringing whist to its present state of perfection. He died in London in 1769, at the age of ninety-seven.

Pronouncing a Word.—E. P. K. would like to know how the word "Indian" is pronounced. He finds some authorities that say "Ind-yan," and, to settle a dispute, writes to the *Ledger*. *Answer:* The word may be pronounced "Ind-yan" or "In-di-un," the "i" in the second syllable like "i" in "mit." When recognized authorities give a choice of ways, the reader can use that which pleases him best.

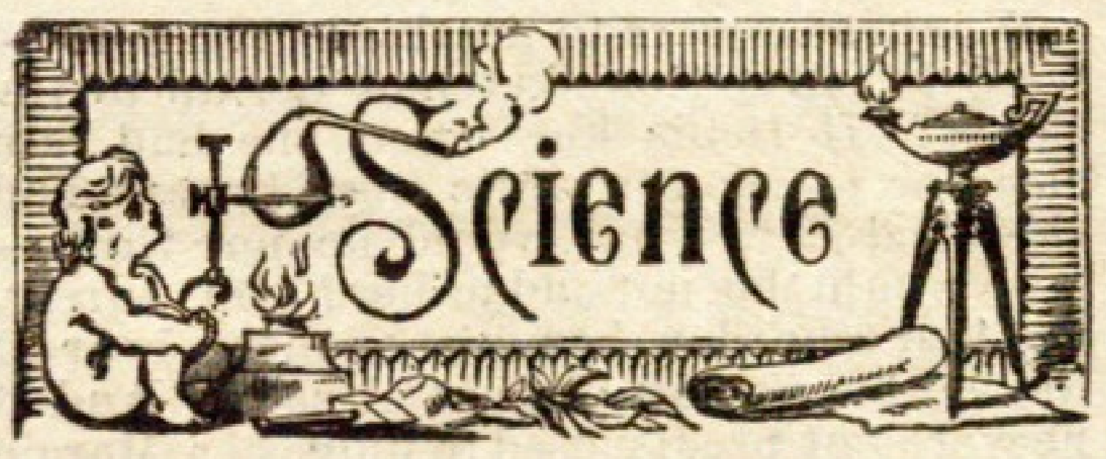
A Quotation.—Anabel wants to know who was the author of the lines—

> "Night drew her sable curtain down
> And pinned it with a star."

Answer: Macdonald Clarke was the author of the lines. He was an eccentric New Yorker, and called himself "The Mad Poet." Mad or sane, he wrote some very beautiful things.

Latin Prefix.—Inquirer says he often sees the letters *re* used, and wants to know what they mean. *Answer:* *Re* is an old form of Latin prefix, and signifies against, back, again, anew.

⁂ Several letters stand over to be answered in our next.



Science

How the Chinese Count Time. The Chinese sun-dial embodied the usual principle, but was crude, indeed. A rod or needle set upright reflected a shadow on a flat surface as the sun moved. On this were characters indicating the hours of the day. The Chinese also used a water-clock called the clepsydra. It was a dish of copper or other material, with an extremely small aperture, from which the water trickled, drop by drop. The clepsydra of Canton is thus described by a traveller: "It is a vase of copper; it is situated in a pavilion built on a double arch that crosses a street leading from the great south gate of the city to the palace of the treasurer of the province. Like that which existed, and perhaps exists still in the Pekin observatory, it is composed of four copper vases, whence water runs from one to another by little tubes fixed at the base. The vase that rests on the floor has on its wooden cover a kind of handle, crossed by a rule mounted on a float and covered with characters representing the hours. When the water has run out, that is, in the morning or evening, it is poured again into the uppermost vase. There is a little brick staircase by which the attendant ascends. In the temples there are attendants whose business it is to hang up a placard, with a white ground, on which is indicated the hour. They strike the hours of the day on a drum, and at night they beat a gong. The attendants who thus look after the flight of time occupy the intervals between in making sticks of incense, on which are marked the hours. These are sticks so arranged as to burn a certain length of time for every hour, and these are used by peasants and others. The stick is lighted when the gong sounds, and in this way the private individual can keep very tolerable account of the hours as they pass."

Variety in Spectacles. Within the past few years very great improvements have been made in spectacles. Formerly when one desired to see objects a long way off, one pair of glasses was necessary, and to read or examine objects close at hand another kind was required. Latterly, glasses are made in two sections, the upper being for distance and the lower portion for near-by work. The lower halves are set into the upper in nearly a half circle. This enables the wearer to use the eyes directly in front and toward the sides. Glasses cut in half, in straight pieces, are much less agreeable than those with the curved lower sections. The use of glasses is becoming so general that it is no unusual thing to see scores of children in a school wearing them. The importance of properly fitted glasses cannot be overestimated. Eminent authorities declare that many cases of nervousness, nervous prostration, insomnia, a general breaking up of the health and insanity are directly traceable to ill-fitting glasses. This being the case, it behooves those who wear these necessary aids to see that they are exactly suited to their peculiar condition.

A New Material. The inventive genius who discovered that tiny bits of chilled steel were more effective than sand as a material for cutting granite and stone, struck an idea that is to revolutionize these industries. The new material is called "crushite," and takes its name because it simply crushes and grinds the surfaces with which it comes in contact. Very small particles of this steel are used in place of sand in the sand-blast apparatus, and also in boring and drilling in place of diamond drills. It is said that it will require three hundred tons of the best sand to do as much work as one ton of crushite. The particles are tempered to the most intense hardness, without being made brittle, and will sharply indent an anvil when struck with a hammer. The particles of crushite are spherical, and roll backward and forward under the blade with which they are used, by their intense hardness disintegrating the surface, and enabling the work to be pushed with much more rapidity than when sand was used, as has heretofore been the custom.

A Field for Inventors. The offer has been made by distillers and brewers of a reward for the discovery or invention of a bottle that could not be refilled after its contents had been once removed. Brewers and distillers complain that they suffer serious losses because unauthorized persons buy up empty bottles, refill them, closely imitate the labels and style of putting up, and put these unwarranted productions upon the market as genuine goods. A non-fillable bottle is, therefore, among the needed inventions. Just how it is to be made no one is able to give the slightest idea. One of the largest distilleries in the country claims to have been looking for years for just this sort of thing, but without avail. It is hardly possible to make a bottle that might not be emptied and refilled by ingenious persons. Even though it could be so arranged that it could not be filled at the neck, a piece could readily be cut out, then cemented in again in such a way as practically to escape detection.

A New Fire-Proof Safe. By order of the German Government's banking officials, experiments have been made with a safe composed of steel wires and cement. It had been debated whether practical fire-proof vaults could be constructed of this material, and the tests were made to settle this point, with the following result: A safe was placed upon a pyre of bags and drenched with kerosene, which, after being set on fire, kept the safe for half an hour exposed to a heat of eighteen hundred degrees Fahrenheit—that is, a heat in which iron will melt. Two hours after, the safe was opened and the contents, silk, paper, draft blanks, and a maximum thermometer were found to be absolutely uninjured, and the maximum thermometer showed that within the safe the temperature at no time during the test rose above eighty-five degrees.

WOMAN'S WORLD.

All questions which may be asked on the subjects treated in this Department will be answered in the Correspondence column.

Fashion and Fancy. The use of velvet may be said to have reached its limit, so general is its employment. Entire costumes, capes, jackets, hats, trimming of all sorts are made of it, and now that fashion may go just a little farther in this direction, velvet petticoats are the latest fad. They are silk-lined and ruffled, and really are exceedingly elegant for winter wear. It would be difficult to find a prettier petticoat than one just made of cardinal velvet, ruffled with silk to match and trimmed with handsome galloon heading above the narrow box-plaited velvet ruffle at the lower edge of this beautiful garment. It is lined with cardinal taffeta, and there are three narrow pinked-out silk ruffles inside of the hem.

One of the most luxurious of garments is a velvet negligee. This is made of old-rose velvet and trimmed with écru lace. It is in Princesse shape, the fronts laid in a wide box-plait on either side of the collar and extending up into the shoulder-seams. The fullness is caught down flat over the bust, and from this point falls loosely to the foot of the robe. Between these plaits there is a full-length front of lace and silk ruffles matching the velvet in color. There is a high, rolled-back collar, lined with the silk, and leg-o'-mutton sleeves with lace cuffs. The skirt is demi-train and very full. These negligee robes are receiving a good deal of attention nowadays from ladies who need something comfortable in which to rest after a round of gayety. For the occasional odd hour in her own little den with the two or three friends who are admitted to her sanctum the woman of fashion finds such a garment of great use.

Among the other purposes for which velvet is employed is the making of very large, loose wraps for semi-invalids. There are in this world a great many women who, while not really ill in the ordinary acceptation of the term, are rarely well enough to go out, and never able to encounter the changes of temperature that even the best-regulated houses are subject to.

One of these ladies always keeps by her a large, loose cloak, which is thrown over the back of her easy-chair before she sits down. Afterward she may draw it close about her or not, according to the temperature or her physical condition. A cloak of this kind is made of wine-colored velour, and lined with a soft satin not unlike the material used for lining fur garments. It has a large hood and ribbons that tie at the throat if desired. This lady took a course of fresh-air treatment not long since, and by the advice of her physician slept in the open air, selecting for this purpose a veranda, reached through an upper window of a country house. Done up in a cloak of this kind with the hood drawn closely over the head, she slept for hours with the autumn breezes sweeping over her, and found herself greatly benefited by the experiment. A great many garments have their origin in needs of this kind—indeed, she is the wise woman who adapts her wearing apparel to her exact requirements.

Velvet is exceedingly popular for skirts to wear with fancy waists. Dark velvet is preferred, and black is liked best of all, as the black skirt with a bright waist is thought to be more effective and becoming than any other combination. But colors, especially the rich cloth shades, are in good demand, and when judiciously used are among the most practical of fabrics. A skirt of dark-blue velvet is worn with a waist of cream-white crepon. A velvet collar, yoke, belt and sash matching the skirt, are the only trimmings. A Princesse of yellow velvet embroidered in very fine jet and trimmed with white lace, was a recent order for a Western wedding, and a bridal dress of white velvet with point lace and orange-blossoms was worn by a bride who has for some years been placed upon the list of old maids. And a stately and beautiful toilet it was, indeed.

Fashion Notes. A superb costume was recently ordered for one of the coming White House receptions at Washington. The material is the new warp dyed silk about which the fashionable world has been quite enthusiastic. It is in ivory white with roses shading from pink to dark maroon. The dress is lavishly draped with Valenciennes lace and is made with V-shaped neck filled in with embroidered tulle; the sleeves are puffs of silk and lace, and are finished at the elbows by lace ruffles. The inner edge of the hem of the skirt has a thick ruching made of white, pink and maroon silk, pinked out at the edges and plaited together, the white ruffle being next to the skirt.

An evening cloak is made of rich brocade. It has a deep yoke and high rolling collar of embroidered velvet; from the lower edge of the yoke fall tassel fringes of fine jet. These are at least half a yard in depth. The sleeves are very large puffs from shoulders to elbows with fitted cuffs edged with sable. The garment falls to the feet and is finished down the front and around the hem with fur; the collar is fur-lined and may be worn standing or turned back upon the yoke.

A handsome collarette is made of three rows of lace, one falling below another. The upper row is attached to a collar of very soft, fine crépon. From the front corners of the collar are long scarf ends of the crépon that cross over the bust, pass under the arms and meet at the back with a bow with loops nearly three-quarters of a yard long, and ends that just clear the hem of the dress.

An opera hood is made of white plush. The hood portion fits the head comfortably, is edged with soft, white fur, and the cape, which extends well over the shoulders, has a similar trimming. An enormous bow of soft ribbon is set on the top of the hood just back of the brim, another is at the back of the neck, and a third in the front with tie-ribbons with long ends.

Long capes of velvet are lined with bright iridescent satin. Some of the new capes have brocaded linings, others have rich silks, with the new warp printing that is so popular and attractive.

WOMAN'S WORLD.

(Continued.)

Crape-surfaced goods are much liked, although not in the extreme of fashion as they have been before. A dress of pearl-gray crape has a collar, square-cut yoke and cuffs of rose-colored velvet. The velvet is covered with plaitings of cream-white lace; a belt and large knot of velvet complete the trimming.

The separate waist still engages the attention of designers. One of the latest models shows a collar, very deep yoke, Eton jacket front and cuffs to the elbows of elaborate embroidery. Ribbon bows are dotted here and there at every point where a bow seems possible.

For information, thanks are due to Messrs. James McCreery & Co., Arnold, Constable & Co. and B. Altman & Co.

The Best Diet for Health. "When doctors disagree, what are we going to do about it?" asked a nervous dyspeptic, after years of experimenting on foods of various sorts. And, sure enough, what are we going to do about it? One authoriy cuts off all food of a certain kind; another restricts in an entirely different direction; another advocates the coarsest sorts of foods; others rush to raw meat and kindred extremes. And when all is said and done there is just about as much dyspepsia and suffering and general misery as there was before these experiments were tried, and nothing seems to be gained but a stock of miscellaneous ideas on diet that prove the most abject failures as far as recovery and comfort are concerned.

One of the greatest difficulties in the way of the treatment of dyspepsia is found in the customs of the modern table, or, to put it more accurately, the fashionable table. Almost all people who profess to live well indulge in what is called French bread three times a day. This is made of flour that has almost all of the nutritious properties bolted out of it. Some day these people are brought up with a round turn of agony, and then they change to Graham bread, and find that it does not agree with them.

Surely it does not, and for the best of reasons. The digestive apparatus is ill, and should be treated in a reasonable way, and not given a sudden and enormous quantity of coarse food to digest and assimilate.

Whole wheat flour bread is the proper kind for such people, but with their French bread they take concentrated foods, highly seasoned dishes, soups that contain cayenne pepper, mace, herbs of various sorts, and are rich beyond the possibility of a delicate organization to struggle with. They eat salads, with dressing containing mustard and cayenne pepper, and then do not know exactly what it is that distresses them. Very many people have peculiarities of constitution and digestive idiosyncrasies, but they will not take the trouble to find out which of these things it is, or what article of diet causes them such discomfort. Sometimes the pain so quickly follows the indulgence in a certain dish that there can be no mistake about it, but, as a rule, they have an idea that everything they eat distresses them. This is the merest nonsense, as they would discover if they took the trouble to do so. If the dyspeptic will adopt for five days a diet of crackers and milk, or, what is better, whole wheat flour wafers, home made, and then carefully take up one dish after another and study their effect, it will take but a little time to decide on the objectionable articles. If gymnastic exercises, horseback riding, or certain kinds of labor cause people pain, they let them alone, unless the sternest necessity drives them to perform such duties; but when it comes to curbing the appetite, they steadfastly refuse to do this, choosing rather to complain, dose, worry and wear their lives out.

It is possible to select from the great mass of palatable dishes those that will not aggravate a tendency to dyspepsia. In ninety-five cases out of a hundred, the dyspeptic is either fond of good living or is too poor to buy the common necessaries of life. Dyspepsia is easily curable, and there is no good and sufficient reason why people should suffer from it all their lives and make themselves, their families and friends wretched in consequence.

Fried Soft Clams. Take three dozen soft clams, remove the tough muscle and drain on a cloth. Beat two eggs, with an ounce of melted butter, a little milk, a pinch of red pepper and a handful of flour. Mix the clams in this batter and drop, one by one, in plenty of very hot, clear fat. Fry them pretty crisp and light brown, drain on a cloth, salt, dish up on a folded napkin, surround with quartered lemons and parsley and serve.

Apple Cake. Place a thin layer of short paste on a round baking sheet, pinch up the edge with the fingers, so as to make a little ledge, sprinkle with sugar. Peel and cut in two some large cooking apples, remove the cores, slice thin, and arrange in circles around the paste, one slice overlapping the other. Sprinkle with ground cinnamon and sugar; bake forty minutes in a moderate oven. When cool, divide in eight or more pieces, dish up after sprinkling again with sugar.

Madeleine Cake. Put in a pastry dish half a pound of fine sugar, half a pound of sifted flour, six eggs, and a wineglassful of brandy. Mix with a wooden spoon, then add half a pound of melted butter and mix carefully, but not more than is necessary to incorporate it with the paste. Pour into one large or a dozen small, well-buttered molds, and bake in a moderate oven.

A Tasty Sauce. Rub through a fine sieve three hard-boiled egg yolks, put in a deep bowl with two raw yolks, salt, pepper and a tablespoonful of prepared mustard. Stir with a wooden spoon, and mix with the yolks, slowly at first, two gills of sweet oil and a little vinegar, finishing with two tablespoonfuls of chopped-fine herbs. If the sauce is sufficiently acid and too thick, add a little cold water.

Patterns.

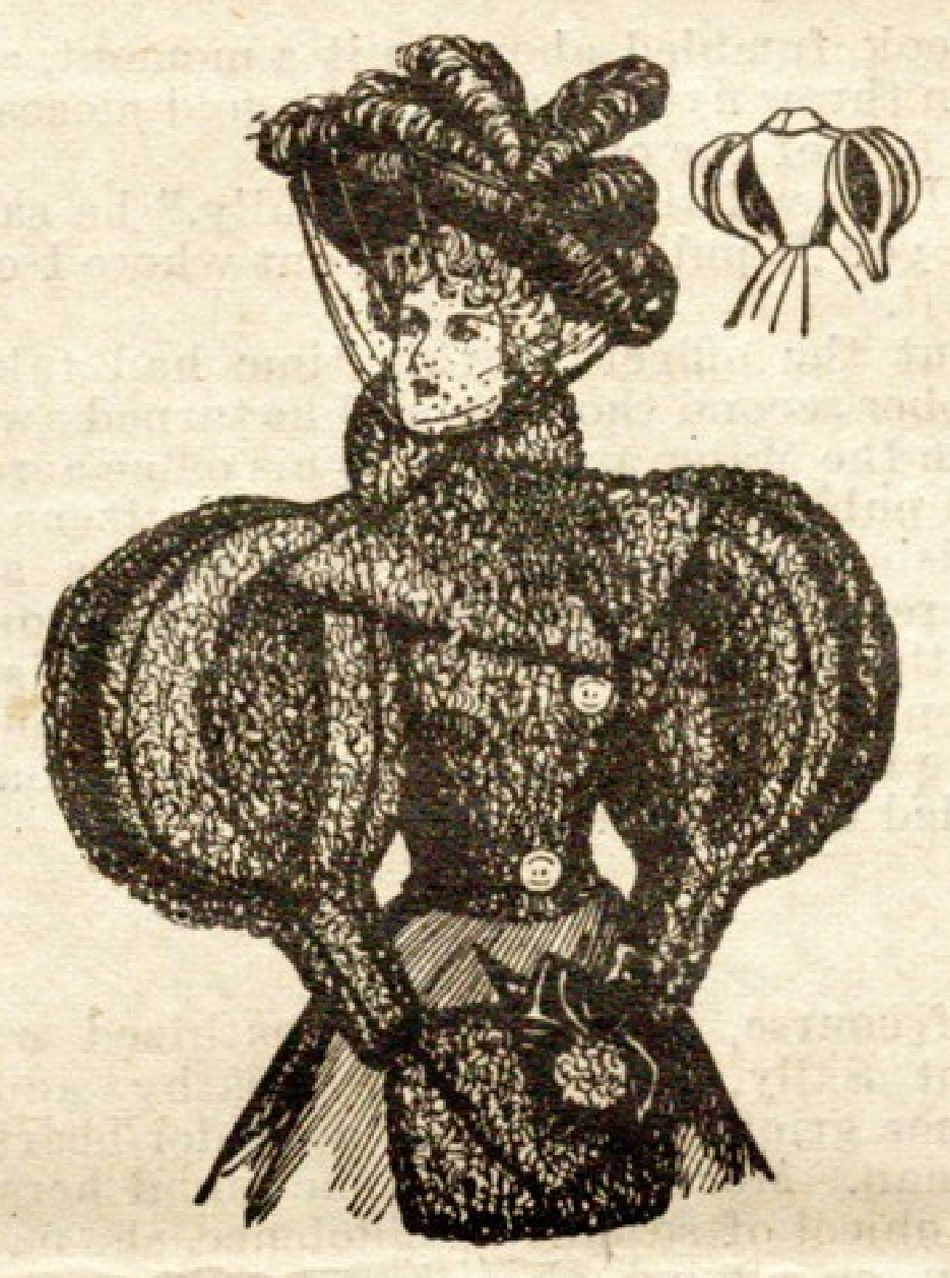
We have made special arrangements by which we can supply our readers with dress-patterns by mail, prepaid, at the nominal price of ten cents per pattern.

Each issue of the *Ledger*, hereafter, will contain illustrations of two or more new styles, for which patterns will be supplied to order. Parties ordering will please use a small sheet of plain writing-paper, small enough to go into an ordinary envelope, write name very plainly and give post-office and State, together with street and number, wherever necessary. Be careful to give correct bust-measure and the number of the pattern desired, using the number under the illustration. Inclose ten cents in stamps for each pattern ordered. State that you are a reader of the *Ledger*, otherwise these patterns will cost you 25, 30 or 35 cents each, as the case may be, these being the regular prices for which the patterns are sold.

The patterns selected for illustration in this issue are numbered 6619, 6577, 6597 and 6614.

Ladies' Eton Jacket.

The jaunty style of this natty English jacket is readily apparent, and makes it a favorite with fashionable ladies of good figure. It is here represented in astrakhan that closely imitates Persian lamb, and the large revers, deep collar and melon sleeves stamp it thoroughly up to date. The jacket ends just below the waist-line in prettily rounded outline, the double-breasted fronts closing with two large pearl buttons at the left side. The seamless back fits smoothly, under-arm gores presenting a shapely adjustment at the sides. The fashionable melon sleeves are shaped in six sections, each upper section with rounded edge, narrowing at the top to fit smoothly into the arm's eye, and at the bottom to fit closely below the elbows to the wrists. The mode is comfortable, and very generally becoming, and can be developed in seal plush, velvet, cloth or fur of any variety. It will be found useful in remodeling an old-fashioned fur coat or cape, and contrasting sections can be introduced for enlargement, or whole sleeves, if necessary.


6619—LADIES' ETON JACKET

Pattern **6619** is cut in six sizes, viz.: 32, 34, 36, 38, 40 and 42 inches bust measure.

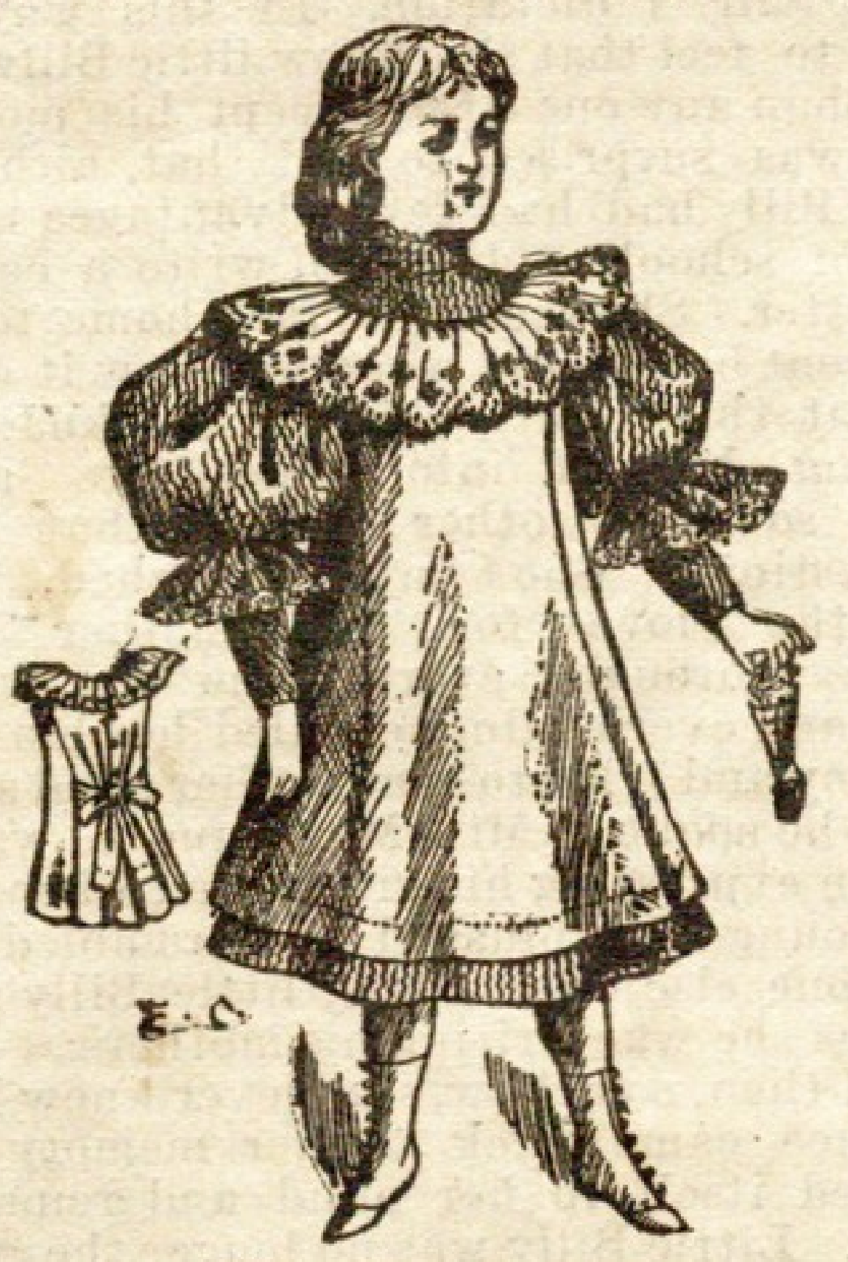
Quantity of Material 44 Inches Wide.

Small size,	32 inches	bust	measure		2½	yds.
Med.	" 36	"	"	"	2¾	"
Large	" 40	"	"	"	3	"
Extra	" 42	"	"	"	3¼	"

Retail price of pattern **6619** is 25 cents. Price to *Ledger* readers, 10 cents.

Child's Apron.

White nainsook and embroidered edging made this neat and simple apron for a little girl. The front and sides are prettily gored, and joining the loose backs by shoulder-seams, the arm's eye being finished by a narrow facing. The lower part falls in graceful fullness and is hemmed deeply, broad strings being inserted in the side seams that tie in a pretty bow, with ends in center back. A gathered frill of embroidery finishes the round, low neck, the back edges being hemmed and closed with buttons and buttonholes. Aprons in this style can be made from plain and dotted Swiss, crossbarred, striped and plain cambric, dimity, percale or gingham. The ruffle can be made of the material, edged with lace or narrow embroidery.



6577—CHILDS' APRON

Pattern **6577** is cut in five sizes, for girls of 2, 4, 6, 8 and 10 years of age.

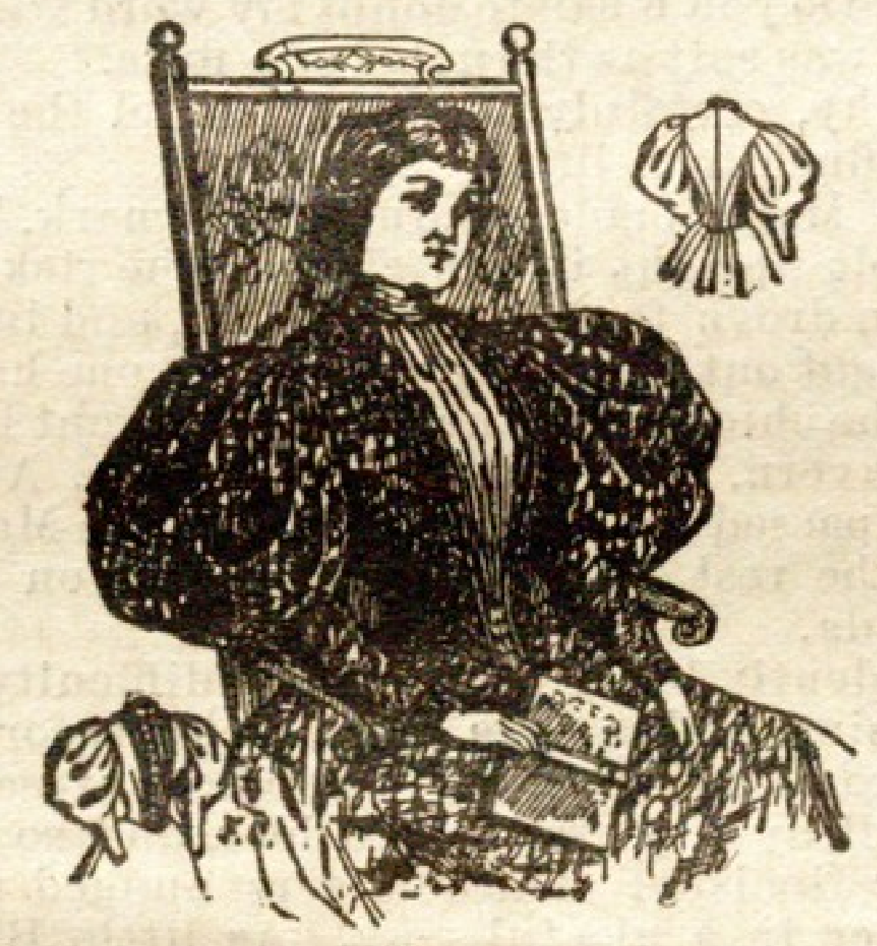
Quantity of Material 36 Inches Wide.

2 years old	2	yards.
8 " "	2¼	"
10 " "	2½	"

Retail price of pattern **6577** is 25 cents. Price to *Ledger* readers, 10 cents.

Stout Ladies' Basque.

The idea that a plain, smooth-fitting basque is the proper mode for a lady of generous proportions is not a correct one, as the severity of outline brings into undesirable prominence the glaring defects of a too stout figure. The graceful lines produced by the smooth vest or plaits on each front, the soft fullness of the vest that is gathered at the top and shirred closely in successive lines at the lower edge, with the extra under-arm gore provided in the pattern, render the style here presented an ideal basque for stout ladies. Fancy silk in dark Persian shades is the material shown, the vest and crush collar being of plain silk in the lightest corresponding color. A single row of passementerie outlines the second fold on each front, and the basque closes invisibly in center. If a plainer effect is desired, the vest and crush collar can be omitted, and the fronts closed with small buttons and buttonholes, as shown in the small drawing, and by omitting the plaited fronts and covering the linings smoothly with material, a plain, glove-fitting basque is the result. Full gigot sleeves can be gathered or plaited at the top, the wrists being completed with a single row of passementerie. This will be found an excellent model, and while specially adapted to the requirements of the stout, is becoming to all figures. Crepon, serge, cloth, camel's hair, Henrietta, cheviot, satin or silk in plain or fancy weave will develop stylishly with vest and collar of soft or sheer fabrics, velvet or fancy silk.


6597—STOUT LADIES' BASQUE

Pattern **6597** is cut in eight sizes, viz.: 32, 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 44 and 46 inches bust measure.

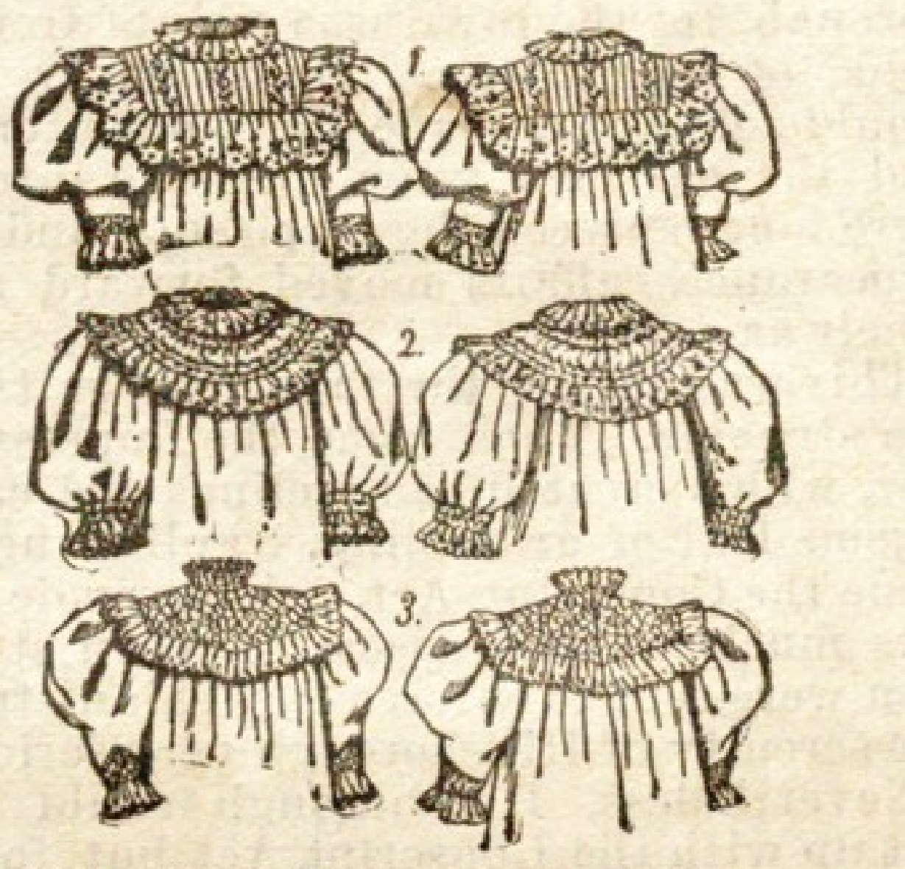
Quantity of Material 44 Inches Wide.

32 inches	bust	measure	3⅝	yards
38 "	"	"	3⅞	"
'44 "	"	"	4⅛	"
46 "	"	"	4¼	"

Retail price of pattern **6597** is 25 cents. Price to *Ledger* readers, 10 cents.

Child's Yokes and Sleeves.

These will be found very desirable in remodeling dresses, aprons, wrappers and nightgowns for little folks, or in making new garments, as a straight full skirt is the only extra piece. Three distinctly different styles of sleeves, with very short body, perforated for trimming in round, square and pointed yoke outline, are included in this pattern. No. 1 shows the square yoke made of fine tucking and embroidered insertion, outlined with a frill of embroidery. The full puffs of fine nainsook are arranged over sleeves of the some material, the wrists being finished with a band of insertion and frill of embroidered edging. The neck is finished to match. No. 2 shows the round yoke made of fine lawn and Valenciennes insertion, strips of the lawn being puffed between rows of insertion applied after the shoulder-seams are joined. A frill of lace edging outlines the yoke, finishes the neck, and completes the full bishop sleeves at the wrists. No. 3, in pointed outline, is made of all-over embroidery, the leg-o'-mutton sleeves of fine dimity having a pointed cuff of embroidery. Both wrists, neck and yoke are finished with a narrow frill of embroidered edging.



6614—CHILD'S YOKES AND SLEEVES

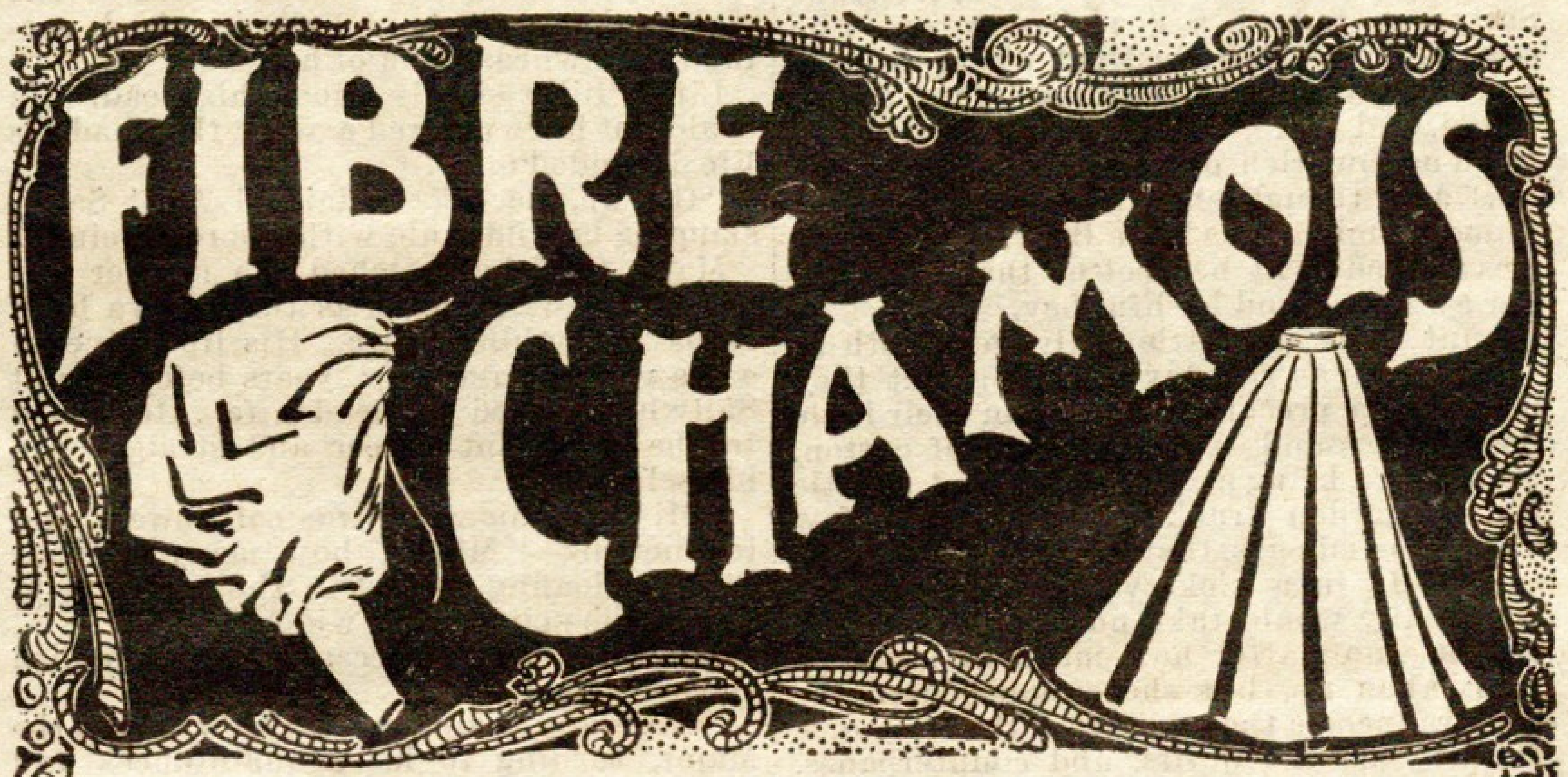
Pattern **6614** is cut in three sizes, for children of six months, one and two years of age.

Quantity of Material 36 Inches Wide.

	No. 1	No. 2	No. 3.
For child 6 months old	1⅛	¾	½ yds.
" " 1 year "	1¼	⅞	⅝ "
" " 2 " "	1⅜	1	¾ "

Retail price of pattern **6614** is 25 cents. Price to *Ledger* readers 10 cents.

Put four tablespoonfuls of sugar and four of sherry into a chafing-dish. Add one sliced banana, cover and cook five minutes. Then add two tablespoonfuls of boiled rice and half a pineapple, carefully picked. Cover, and when smoking hot, serve.



Redfern,
Ladies' Tailor and Habit Maker.
210 Fifth Ave., New York.

American Fibre Chamois Co., Times Bldg., N.Y.

GENTLEMEN:
We enclose a letter received a few days ago, from Miss Lillian Russell, which we think may be of service to you. Yours truly,
(SIGNED) REDFERN.

What—
Lillian Russell
Thinks of Fibre Chamois.

318 West 77th St.,
NEW YORK, August 14, 1895.

Messrs. Redfern, 210 Fifth Ave.

GENTLEMEN:—Kindly make up for me the gown I selected yesterday, using as you suggested the Fibre Chamois in the waist for warmth, and in the skirt and sleeves to give them that very stylish and bouffant effect. I find that the moreen petticoat does not give half the style that the genuine Fibre Chamois does. So naturally use nothing but the genuine goods. The imitation of this particular article I have found to be worse than useless.

Truly yours, (SIGNED) LILLIAN RUSSELL.

A BOLD DESERTER.*

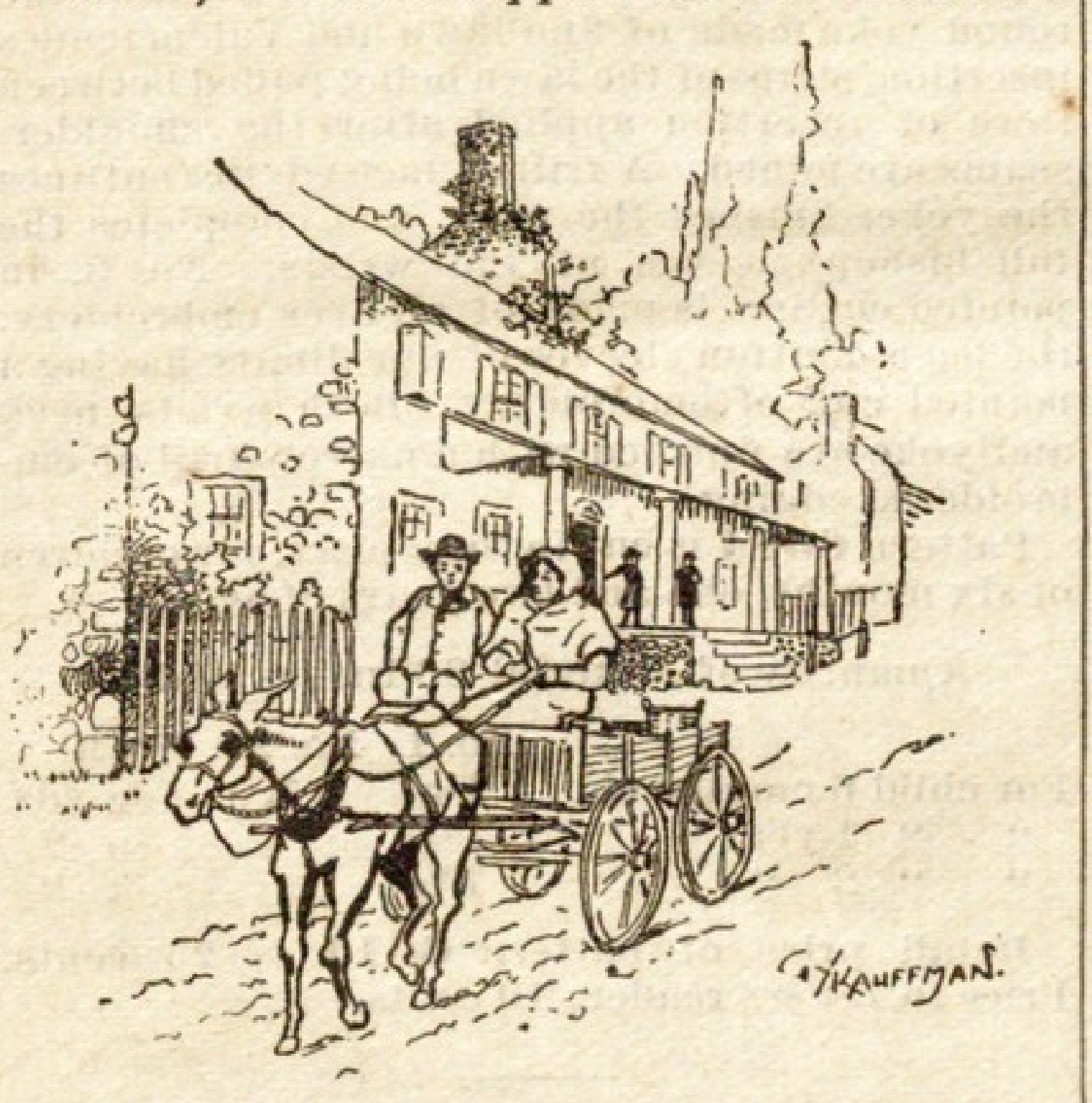
BY JOEL CHANDLER HARRIS.

CHAPTER I.

The war wasn't much of a bother to Hillsborough, for the town was remote from the field of operations. Occasionally news would come that made the women cry out and the old men weep, but the intervals were long between these episodes, and to all appearances affairs moved forward as serenely as ever.

This was during the first year or two of the struggle. Then came the Impressment law, which created bad feelings and caused a good deal of grumbling. Following this came the Conscript Act, which made matters much worse, especially when strange men were sent to enforce it. This disturbed the serenity of Hillsborough very seriously.

Nevertheless, Hillsborough could have put up with the Conscript Act but for one event that stirred the little community from centre to circumference. The Conscript officers had not been in the town a week before they pounced upon little Billy Cochran, the sole support of his widowed mother, who was known throughout that region as Aunt Sally. Little Billy himself was a puzzle to the more thoughtful people. He was so simple and innocent-minded, so ready to do for others what he wouldn't do for himself, that some said he was a half-wit, while others contended that he would have sense enough if his heart wasn't so big.



"WHAT IN THE ROUND WORLD IS THE MATTER, HONEY?"

But everybody liked little Billy—for his mother's sake, if not for his own, for Aunt Sally was, indeed, a good Samaritan. She seemed to know by instinct where trouble and sickness and suffering were to be found, and there, too, she was to be found. High or low, rich or poor, she passed none by. And, though she was as simple and as innocent-minded as little Billy, these qualities seemed to fit her better than they did her awkward and bashful boy.

Aunt Sally and little Billy were both as industrious as the day was long, yet they made but a precarious living on their little patch of ground—a bale or two of cotton, that didn't bring a good price, and a little bit of garden truck which, with a few chickens and eggs, they brought to town occasionally in a rickety one-horse wagon. Aunt Sally would take no pay for nursing the sick, no matter how much of her time was taken up, but she supplemented the meagre income they got from the one-horse farm by making quilts, and counterpanes, and bedspreads, and by taking in weaving, being very expert at the loom.

As may be supposed, Aunt Sally and little Billy didn't wear fine clothes nor put on any airs. Living in middle Georgia (the most democratic region, socially, in the world), they had no need for either the one or the other. They made a bare living, and were tolerably satisfied with that.

One day, shortly after the Conscript officer had established his headquarters in Hillsbsrough, Aunt Sally and little Billy drove into town with a few dozen eggs and three or four chickens to sell. The Conscript officer, sitting on the veranda of the tavern, noticed that little Billy was a well-grown lad, and kept his eye on him, as the rickety, one-horse wagon came through the public square.

There were two or three loungers sitting on the veranda, including Major Goolsby. One of them tapped the Major on the shoulder and pointed to little Billy with his forefinger and to the Conscript officer with his thumb. The Major nodded gravely once or twice, and presently hitched his chair closer to the Conscript officer.

"You ain't a-bagging much game in these parts, I reckon," said the Major, addressing the officer, with half-closed eyes.

"Business is not very good," replied the other, with a chuckle, "but we manage to pick up a few stragglers now and then. Yonder's a chap now"—pointing to little Billy—"that looks like he would be an ornament to the rear-guard in an engagement." The officer was a big, rough-looking man, and seemed to find his present duties very agreeable.

"Do you mean little Billy Cochran?" inquired the Major.

"I don't know his name," said the officer. "I mean that chap riding in the chariot with the fat woman."

"That boy," remarked the Major with an emphasis that caused the Conscript officer to regard him with surprise, "is the sole support of his mother. He's all she's got to make her crop."

"Maybe so," the officer said, "but the law makes no provision for cases of that kind."

"You said 'maybe so,'" suggested the Major. "Do you mean to doubt my word?" His voice was soft as the notes of a flute.

"Why, certainly not!" exclaimed the officer, flushing a little.

The Major made no further remark, but sat bolt upright in his chair. The rickety wagon drove to the tavern door, and little Billy got out, a basket of eggs in one hand and the chickens in the other. He went into the tavern, and while he was gone, Aunt Sally passed the time of day with the Major and the rest of her acquaintances on the veranda.

Evidently little Billy had no difficulty in disposing of his eggs and chickens, for he soon came out smiling. The officer arose as little Billy appeared in the door, and so did Major Goolsby. The loungers nudged one another in a gleeful way. As little Billy came out, the Conscript officer drew a formidable-looking memorandum-book from his pocket and tapped the young man on the shoulder. Little Billy looked around in surprise, the blood mounted to his face and he laughed sheepishly.

"What is your name?" the officer asked, poising his pencil.

"William Henry Harrison Cochran," replied little Billy.

"How old are you?"

"Twenty, April gone."

"Report at my office, under the Temperance Hall, next Wednesday morning, the day after to-morrow. The army needs your services."

"Do you want me to go to the war?" asked little Billy, a quaver in his voice.

"Yes," the officer replied. "You fall under the Conscript law."

"What'll mammy do?"

"Really, I don't know. The Confederacy needs you worse than your mammy does just now."

Little Billy hung his head and walked to the rickety wagon.

"Mind," said the officer, "Wednesday morning at ten o'clock. I don't want to send after you."

"Why, what in the round world is the matter, honey?" Aunt Sally inquired, seeing the downcast look of her son.

Little Billy simply shook his head. He could not have uttered a word then had his life depended on it.

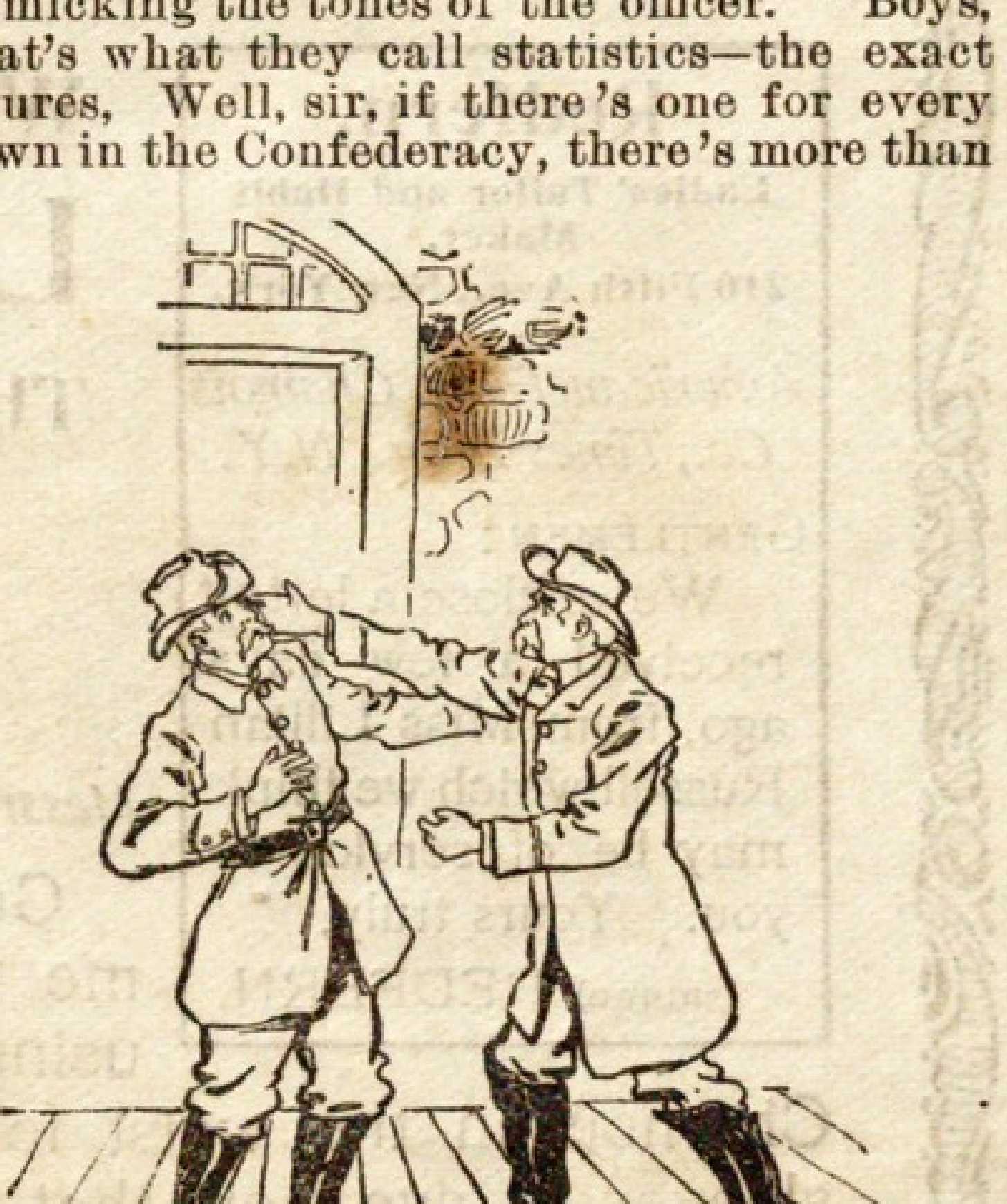
"Git up, Beck!" exclaimed Aunt Sally, slapping her old mule with the rope reins.

Major Goolsby watched the mother and son for a few moments as they drove back across the public square. His lip quivered as he remembered how, years before, Aunt Sally had nursed his dead wife. He turned to the Conscript officer and straightened himself up.

"Mister"—his voice was soft, sweet, and insinuating—"Mister, how many of your kind are loafing around in the South, picking up the mainstay of widows?"

"As many as are necessary, sir," replied the officer.

"'As many as are necessary, sir,'" said the Major, turning to his acquaintances and mimicking the tones of the officer. "Boys, that's what they call statistics—the exact figures, Well, sir, if there's one for every town in the Confederacy, there's more than a regiment of 'em. Don't you reckon I'm about right in my figures?"



"THAT'S FOR LITTLE BILLY."

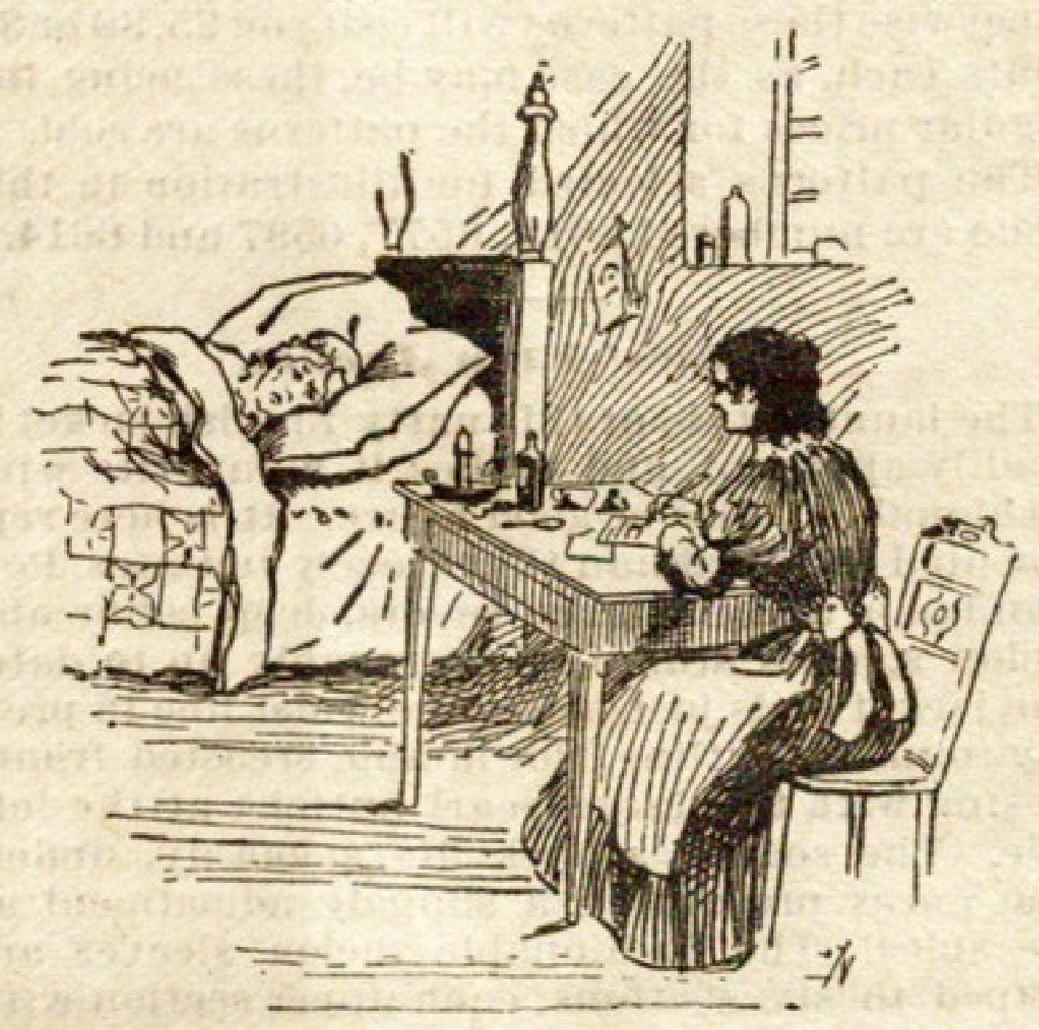
"I couldn't say," replied the officer, in an indifferent way. He saw that Major Goolsby was angry, but he didn't know what the Major's anger meant. "I couldn't say. If all of them have enlisted as many men as I have, the army will be a great deal larger in the course of the next three months."

"Don't you think you could do a great deal more damage to the Yankees, if you had the will, than that boy you've just served notice on?" asked the Major, with a little more asperity than he had yet shown. "Why don't you get a basket and catch tomtits, and send 'em on to the front? The woods are full of 'em."

"Now, if you'll tell me how all this concerns you," said the officer, bristling up, "I'll be much obliged to you."

The Major took one step forward and, with a movement quick as lightning, slapped the officer in the face with his open hand. "That's for little Billy!" he exclaimed.

The officer sprang back and placed his hand under his coat as if to draw a pistol. The Major whipped out a big morocco pocketbook, fumbled about in it a moment, and then threw five twenty-dollar gold pieces at the feet of the officer.



MISS MARY WRITES A NOTE TO LITTLE BILLY.

"I'll send that to your family," he said, "if you'll pull your pistol out where I can see it."

But the officer by this time had taken a sober second thought, and he turned away from the Major and went to his office across the public square. The older citizens of Hillsborough applauded his coolness and discretion, and one of them told him confidentially that if he had drawn his pistol when Major Goolsby begged him to he would have been a dead man before he could have pulled the hammer back.

CHAPTER II.

Of course, everybody sympathized with Aunt Sally, and their sympathy added to her grief, for she was a tender-hearted woman. Moreover, when she found herself the object of so much condolence, she naturally concluded that her trouble was a great deal worse than she had any idea of, and she sat in her humble home and wept, and, like Rachel, refused to be comforted.

But the situation was not nearly so bad as Aunt Sally thought it was, or as Major Goolsby expected it would be. The Major himself sent her a little negro girl to keep her company, and the neighbors for miles around contended with one another in their efforts to make her comfortable. Not a day passed, except Sundays, that Miss Mary, the Major's daughter, didn't drive out to Aunt Sally's little place and spend an hour or two with her. Miss Mary was eighteen, as pretty as a peach, and as full of fun as an egg is of meat. She was a brunette with blue eyes, and although they were laughing eyes, they could look very sad and tender when occasion called for it.

She made herself very useful to Aunt Sally. She read to her the letters that little Billy sent back from the camp of instruction at Loudersville, and answered them at Aunt Sally's dictation. In this way she came to feel that she knew little Billy better than any one else except his mother. She was surprised to find that, although little Billy had had few advantages in the way of schooling, he could write a beautiful letter. She took the fact home to her innocent bosom and wondered how it could be that this country lad had the knack of putting himself into his letters along with so many other things that were interesting. She was touched, too, by the love for his mother that shone through every line he wrote. Over and over again, he called her his dear mammy and tried to comfort her; and sometimes he spoke of Miss Mary, and he was so deft in expressing his gratitude to her that the young lady blushed and trembled lest some one else was writing little Billy's letters, as she was writing his mother's.

And then, somehow, she never knew how, his face came back to her memory and planted itself in her mind and remained there. Little Billy was no longer the green, awkward and ungainly country boy, peddling the scanty fruits of his poverty about the village, but a hero, who had no thought for anybody or anything except his dear old mammy.

As the cold weather came on, little Billy wrote that he would feel a great deal more comfortable in the wind if he knew where he could get a thick suit of clothes and a heavy pair of shoes. But he begged his dear mammy not to worry about that, for he had no doubt the clothes and shoes would be forthcoming when he needed them most. Miss Mary skipped this part of the letter when she was reading it aloud to Aunt Sally, but it wasn't long before the clothes were made, with the aid and under the direction of little Billy's mother; and the shoes were bought, costing Major Goolsby a pretty round sum in Confederate currency. Moreover, Miss Mary baked a fruit cake with her own hands, and this was to be put in the box with the clothes and shoes.

The next thing was to find out if anybody from Hillsborough or from the countryside was going to the camp of instruction, where little Billy's headquarters were. But right in the midst of expectation and preparation Aunt Sally fell ill. She had never reconciled herself to her separation from little Billy. Until the conscript law tore him away from her side she had never been parted from him a day since the Lord sent him to her arms.

The strain was too much for the motherly heart to bear. Aunt Sally gradually pined away, though she tried hard to be cheerful, and, at last, just before little Billy's Christmas box was to be sent, she took to her bed and lay there as helpless as a child. The doctor came and prescribed, but little Billy was the only medicine that would do Aunt Sally any good. So she kept to her bed, growing weaker and weaker, in spite of everything that the doctor and the neighbors could do.

And last when an opportunity came to forward the box, Miss Mary wrote a note and pinned it where it could be seen the first thing. She began it with "Dear Little Billy," but this seemed too familiar, and she began it with "Mr. Cochran." She told him that his dear mammy was very ill, and if he wanted to see her he would do well to come home at once. It was a very pretty letter, brief, simple and sympathetic.

This duty done, Miss Mary turned her attention to nursing Aunt Sally, and, except at night, was never absent from her bedside more than an hour at a time.

CHAPTER III.

When little Billy arrived at the camp of instruction, the first person on whom his eye fell was Private Chadwick. Simultaneously the eye of Private Chadwick fell on little Billy. Mr. Chadwick was something of a humorist in his way, and a rough one, as the raw conscripts found out to their cost. A heartless jest rose to his lips, but something in little Billy's face—an expression of loneliness, perhaps—stayed it. In another moment Private Chadwick's hand fell on little Billy's shoulder, and it was a friendly hand.

"Where from?" he asked.

"Close about Hillsborough," little Billy answered.

"I reckon you know the Tripps and the Littles?"

"Mighty well," said little Billy.

"What name?"

"Cochran."

"How old?"

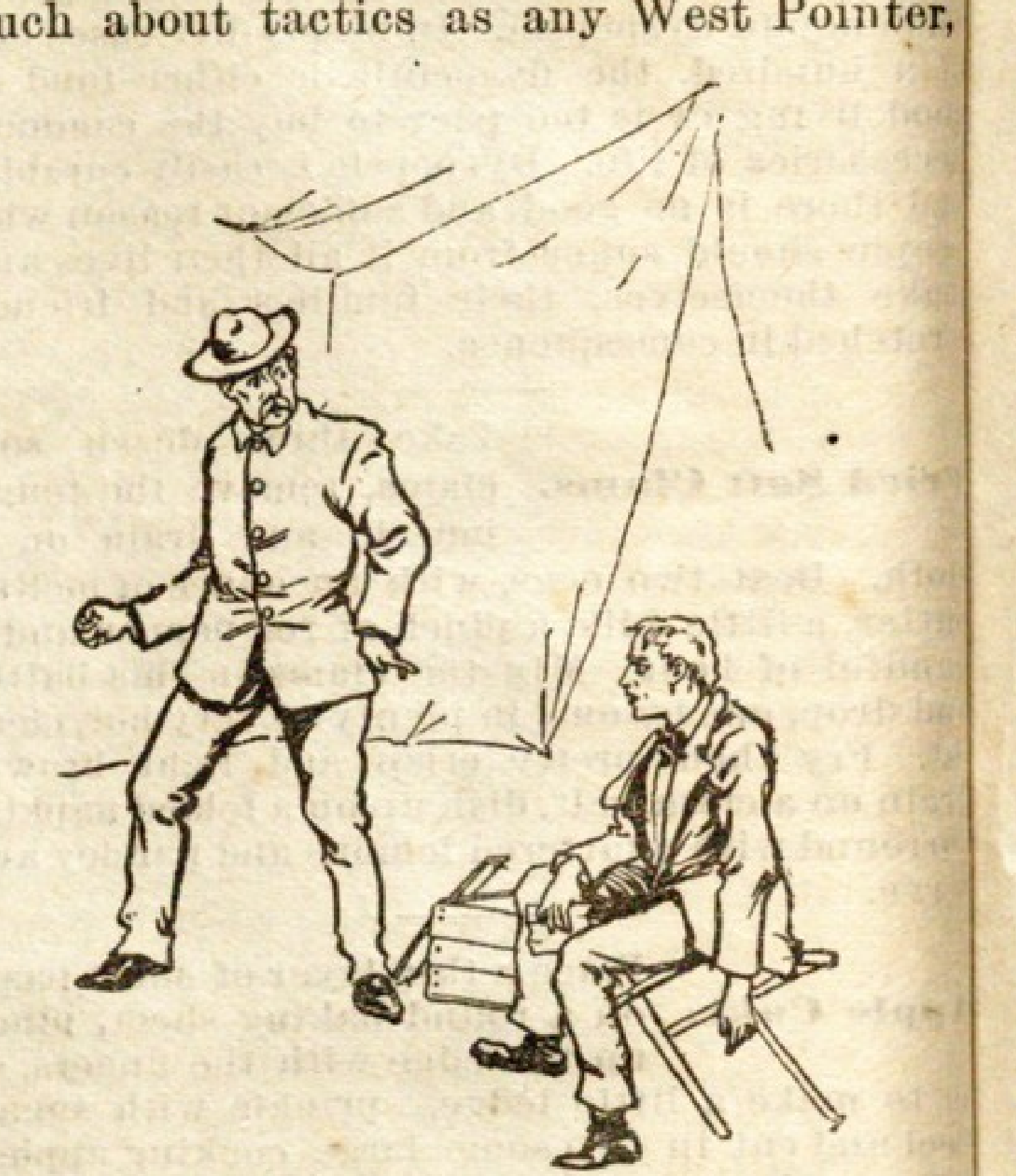
"Twenty, last April gone."

"You don't look like you're fitten to do much soldierin'," suggested Private Chadwick.

"Oh, I'm tough," said little Billy, laughing, though he had a big lump in his throat.

"Come with me, buddy," remarked the old soldier, smiling. "If I'm ever to keep a tavern, I reckon I might as well begin with you as a boarder."

And so, for the time at least, little Billy was installed in Private Chadwick's tent, much to the surprise of those who knew the peculiarities of the man. The camp was in charge of Captain Mosely, who was recovering from a wound, and he had selected his old comrade, Private Chadwick, as his drillmaster—a curious selection it seemed to be to those who didn't know the man, but the truth was that Private Chadwick knew as much about tactics as any West Pointer, and had the knack, too, of imparting what he knew, even if he had to use his belt-strap to emphasize his remarks.



"HELLO! WHAT KIND OF A PICNIC IS THIS?"

The upshot of the matter was that little Billy went to Private Chadwick's tent and remained there. He and the private became inseparable companions when neither was on duty, and in these hours of leisure little Billy learned as much about tactics as he did from the actual practice of drilling. He seemed to take to the business naturally, and far outstripped even the men who had been drilling twice a day for three months. Naturally, therefore, Private Chadwick was very proud of his pupil, and frequently called Captain Mosely's attention to little Billy's proficiency.

Over and often during the pleasant days of November, Private Chadwick could be seen sitting in front of their tent engaged in earnest conversation, little Billy leaning his face on his hands, and Private Chadwick making fantastic figures in the sand with the point of his bayonet. On such occasions little

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Billy would be talking about his dear old mammy, and about Miss Mary, and, although Private Chadwick was something of a joker, in his way, he never could see anything to laugh at in little Billy's devotion to his mother or in his innocent regard for Miss Mary Goolsby. Somehow it carried the private back to his own boyhood days, and he listened to the lad with a sympathy that was as quick and as delicate as a woman's.

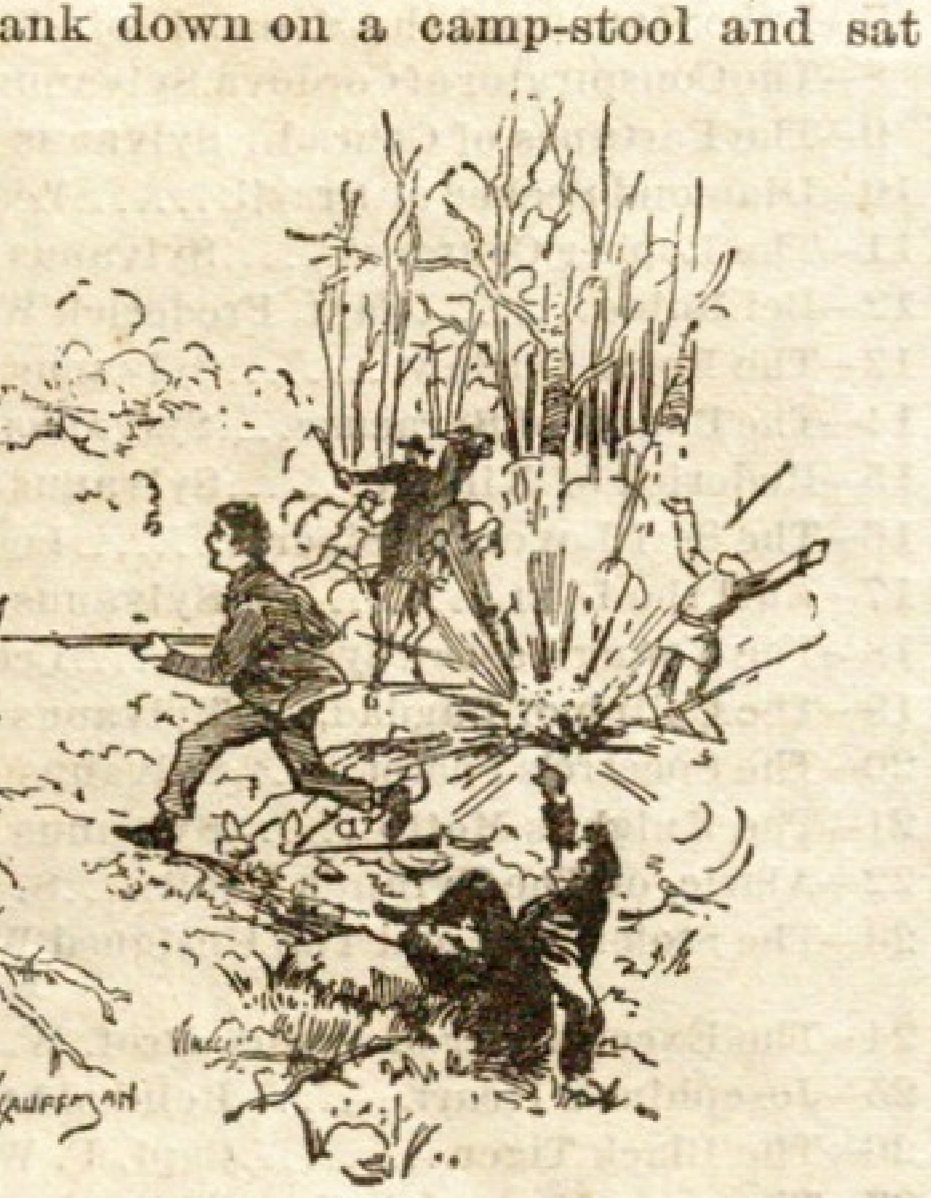
About the middle of December, little Billy's box came. He carried it to Private Chadwick's tent in great glee, and opened it at once.

He had said to himself as he went along that he was sure there was something nice in the box, and he hoped to find Mr. Chadwick either in the tent or close by; but the drill-master was engaged just then in making a refractory conscript mark time in the guard tent by jabbing a bayonet at his toes.

So, for the moment, little Billy had his precious box all to himself. He opened it and found the letter that Miss Mary had pinned to the clothes. It ran thus:

> "Mr. Cochran:—Aunt Sally is very ill now and has been ill for some time. We are afraid that you are the only person in the world that can cure her. She is calling your name and talking about you all the time. It would do her so much good to see you that I hope you can make it convenient to come home very soon, if only for a day. We should all be so glad to see you.
>
> "Your true friend,
>
> "Mary Goolsby."

Holding this letter in his hand, little Billy sank down on a camp-stool and sat there. He forgot all about the box. He sat as still as a statue, and he was sitting thus when Private Chadwick came into the tent a half hour later. Little Billy neither turned his head nor moved when the drill-master came in, snorting with rage and consigning all awkward recruits to places too warm to be mentioned in polite conversation. But he pulled himself up when he saw little Billy sitting on the camp-stool staring at vacancy.


HE NEVER HEARD THE EXPLOSION THAT SHATTERED THE TREES AROUND.

"Hello!" he cried. "What kind of a picnic is this? If my nose ain't gone and forgot her manners, I smell cake." He paused and looked at little Billy. Seeing that the lad was troubled about something, he lowered his voice. "What's the matter, old man? If it's trouble, it'll do you more good to talk about it than to think about it."

For answer, little Billy held out the letter. Private Chadwick took it and began to read it. Then he held it close to his eyes.

"Now, this is right down funny," he said, "and it's just like a gal. She's gone and scratched out the best part." Little Billy neither moved nor spoke, but turned inquiring eyes on his patron and friend. "She began it 'Dear Little Billy,'" Private Chadwick continued, "and then she went and scratched it out."

It was a very fortunate stroke indeed. The color slowly came back into little Billy's face and stayed there. After Private Chadwick had read the letter, little Billy took it and gave it a careful inspection. His face was so full of color at what he saw that a stranger would have said he was blushing.

"What's to be done about it?" Private Chadwick asked.

"I must go home and see mammy," replied little Billy.

Private Chadwick shook his head, and continued to shake it, as if by that means he would blot out the idea.

"Can't I get a furlough?" little Billy asked, with tears in his voice.

If any other conscript had asked him this question, Private Chadwick would have used violent language, but the innocence and ignorance of little Billy were dear to him.

"Now, who ever heard of the like of that?" he said in a kindly tone. "There ain't but one way for a conscript to leave this camp, and that is to desert."

"I'll do it!" exclaimed little Billy.

"You know what that means, I reckon," said Private Chadwick, dryly.

"It means that I'll see my dear mammy once more," replied little Billy. "And after that, I don't care what happens."

Private Chadwick looked at little Billy long and hard, smiling under his mustache, and then went out. He walked to the centre of the encampment, where the flag-pole stood. This inoffensive affair he struck hard with his fist, exclaiming under his breath: "Lord, Lord! What makes some people have such big gizzards?"

The next day little Billy was missing.

CHAPTER IV.

Captain Mosely had the camp searched, but without result, and in a little while everybody knew that the lad was a deserter. During the morning Private Chadwick had a long talk with Captain Mosely, and the result of it was that no immediate arrangements were made to send a guard after little Billy.

Meanwhile, Aunt Sally was growing weaker and weaker. Sometimes, in her troubled dreams, she imagined that little Billy had come, and, at such moments, she would cry out a glad welcome, and laugh as heartily as ever. But, for the most part, she knew that he was still absent, and that all her dreams were futile and fleeting.

Nevertheless, one bright morning in the latter part of December little Billy walked into his mother's humble home, weary and footsore. Aunt Sally heard his footstep on the door-sill, and, weak as she was, sat up in bed and held out her arms to him. Her dreams had come true, but they had come true too late. When little Billy removed the support of his arms, in order to look at his dear mammy's face, she was dead. The joy of meeting her son again was too much for the faithful and tender heart.

All that could be done by kind hearts and willing hands was done by Miss Mary and the neighbors. Little Billy shed no tears. The shock had benumbed all his faculties. He went about in a dazed condition. But when, the day after the funeral, he went to tell Miss Mary good-by, the ineffable pity that shown in her face touched the source of his grief, and he fell to weeping as he had never wept before. He would have kissed her hand, but she drew it away, and, as he straightened himself, tiptoed and kissed him on the forehead. With that she, too, fell to weeping, and thus they parted. But for many a long day little Billy felt the pressure of soft and rosy lips on his forehead.

He sold the old mule that had served his dear mammy so faithfully, and this gave him sufficient money to pay his way back to camp on the railroad, with some dollars to spare. As good fortune would have it, the first man he saw when the train stopped at the station nearest the camp was Private Chadwick. Little Billy spoke to his friend with as much cheerfulness as he could command.

"I'm mighty glad to see you, old man," said Chadwick. "I knowed in season that you was certain to come back—and, sure enough, here you are. You've had trouble, too. Well, trouble has got a long run and a hard hand, and I ain't never saw the livin' human bein' that could git away from it when it begins to feel around for 'em."

"Yes," replied little Billy, simply; "I'll never have any more trouble like that I've had."

"It's mighty hard at first always," remarked Private Chadwick, with a sigh, "but it's mighty seasonin'. The man that ain't the better for it in the long run ain't much of a man. That's the way I put it down."

"Am I a deserter, sure enough?" asked little Billy, suddenly remembering his position.

"Well, it's a mixed case," answered the private. "You've gone and broke the rules and articles of war—I reckon that's what they call 'em. You took Dutch leave. The Cap said if you didn't come back in ten days he'd send a file of men after you, and then your cake would 'a' been all dough. But now you've come back of your own free will, and the case is mixed. You are bound to be arrested. All that's been fixed, and that's the reason I've been comin' to train every day sence you've been gone. I wanted to arrest you myself."

"Then I'm a prisoner," suggested little Billy.

"That's about the size and shape of it," replied Private Chadwick.

His tone was so emphatic that little Billy looked at him. But there was a kindly light in the private's eyes and a pleasant smile lurking under his mustache: so that the young fellow thought he might safely go back to his grief again.

When they arrived at camp, Private Chadwick, with a great show of fierce formality, led little Billy to the guard tent, and there placed him in charge of a newly-made corporal, who knew so little of his duties that he went inside the tent, placed his gun on the ground and had a long familiar chat with the prisoner.

After the camp had gone to bed, Private Chadwick relieved the guard, and carried little Billy to his own tent, where Captain Mosely was waiting.

This rough old soldier gave little Billy a lecture that was the more severe because it was delivered in a kindly tone. At the end, he informed little Billy that the next day a squad of picked men from the conscript camp was to go to the front in charge of Private Chadwick, the enemy having shown a purpose to make a winter campaign.

"Would you like to go?" the captain asked.

Little Billy seized the captain's arm. "Don't fool me," he cried. "If I am fit to go, let me go. That's what I am longing for."

The captain felt about in the dark for little Billy's hand, and grasped it. "You shall go," he said, and walked from the dark tent into the starlight outside.

The nights are long to those who sleep with sorrow, but, after all, the days come quickly, as little Billy soon found out. The next morning he found himself whirling away to Virginia, where some cruel business was on foot. The days went fast enough then, and the railway train, with its load of soldiers, puffed and snorted as if it wanted to go faster, too; but it went fast enough—just fast enough to be switched off to the right of Richmond and plunge its load of conscripts and raw recruits unprepared into a furious battle that had just reached the high-tide of destruction. Private Chadwick was swept along with the rest, and he tried hard to keep his eye on little Billy, but found it impossible, since they were soon mixed with men who were wounded and with men who were running away. Some of the latter turned again when they saw the reinforcements rushing forward pell mell.

Little Billy was far in front of the others. He heard the crackle of musketry and the thunder of the cannon, and ran toward the smoke and confusion. A shell dropped in front of him and spun around, spitting fire, but he ran on, and never even heard the explosion that shattered the trees around, and played havoc with the reinforcements that were following. He jumped over men that were lying on the ground, whether dead or wounded, he never knew. Some one, apparently in command, yelled at him with a savage curse, but he paid no attention to it. Directly in front of him he saw a battery of three guns. Two were in action, but one had no one to manage it. On each side of this battery, and a little to the rear, the line of battle stretched away.

Seeing little Billy running forward, followed by the recruits from the train, the line of battle began to cheer, and at the same time to advance. He had practiced with an old six-pounder at the conscript camp, and he now ran, as if by instinct, to the gun that had been silenced. The Confederates charged, but had to fall back again, and then they began to retire, slowly at first, and then with some haste. Little Billy paid no attention to this movement at all. He continued to serve his gun and fire it as rapidly as he could. Shot and shell from the Federal batteries plowed up the ground around him, but never touched him. Presently a tall man with a long brown beard rode out of the smoke and ordered little Billy to retreat, pointing, as he did so, to the bristling line of Federals charging up the hill.

"Take hold of my stirrup," said the tall man. He spurred his horse into a rapid trot, and little Billy trotted by his side, mightily helped by holding on to the stirrup. In this way they were soon out of it, and in a little while had caught up with the main body, which had planted itself a couple of miles farther back, while the brigade in which little Billy had fought was holding the enemy at bay.

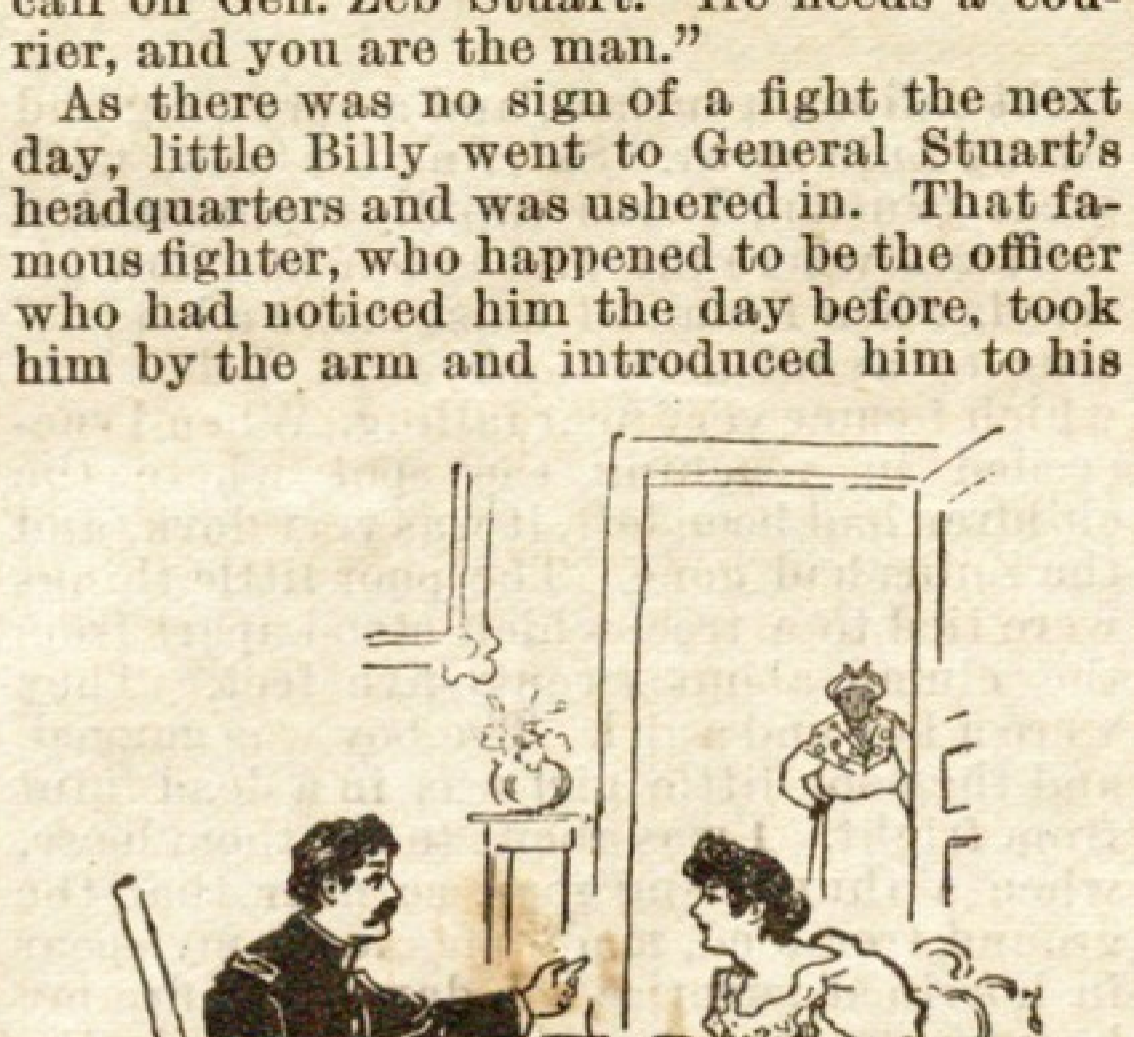
Little Billy's face was black with powder, but his eyes shone like stars. He knew now that never again would danger or the fear of death cause him to flinch.

"What regiment do you belong to?" asked the tall man, as they went along.

"None," replied little Billy, simply. Then he told how he was just from a conscript camp in Georgia. When they arrived at the Confederate position the tall man called to an officer.

"This is my rear guard," said he. "See that he is cared for." Then to little Billy: "When this affair blows over, brush up and call on Gen. Zeb Stuart. He needs a courier, and you are the man."

As there was no sign of a fight the next day, little Billy went to General Stuart's headquarters and was ushered in. That famous fighter, who happened to be the officer who had noticed him the day before, took him by the arm and introduced him to his staff, and told how he had found him serving a gun after the entire brigade had begun to retreat.


HE FOUGHT THE BATTLES OVER AGAIN.

This was the beginning. Little Billy became a courier, then an aid, and when the war closed he was in command of a regiment. His recklessness as a fighter had given a sort of romantic color to his name, so that the newspaper correspondents found nothing more popular than some anecdote about Colonel Cochran.

His fame had preceded him to Hillsborough, and he had a queer feeling when the older citizens, men who had once awed him by their pride and their fine presence, took off their hats as they greeted him. The most demonstrative among these was Major Goolsby.

"You are to come right to my house, Colonel. You belong to us, you know." This was Major Goolsby's greeting, as he clung to Colonel Cochran's hand. "It will be a great surprise to Mary. She'll never know you in the round world. Why, you've grown to be a six-footer."

So there was nothing for Colonel Cochran to do but to go to the Goolsby place, a fine house built on a hill beyond the old church. The Major wanted to give his daughter a surprise, and so he carried Colonel Cochran into the parlor, and then told Miss Mary that one of her friends had called to see her.

The young lady went skipping into the parlor, and then paused with a frightened air, as she saw a six-foot man in faded uniform rise to meet her.

"Miss Mary," said Colonel Cochran, holding out his hand.

"Are you—" She paused, grew white and then red, and suddenly turned and ran out of the room, nearly upsetting the Major, who was standing near the door.

"Why, what on earth's the matter?" he cried. "Well, if this don't beat— Did she know you, Colonel?"

"I'm afraid she did," replied the Colonel grimly.

The Major tiptoed to his daughter's room, opened the door softly and found her on her knees by her bed, crying. Thereupon he tiptoed back again, and said to Colonel Cochran: "It's all right. She's crying."

The Colonel smiled dryly. "If I make the women cry, what will the children do when they see me!"

The Major laid his hand affectionately on Cochran's arm. "Don't you fret," he said. "Just wait."

And so wonderful are the ways of women, that when Miss Mary came out again, she greeted the Colonel cordially, and was as gay as a lark. And nothing would do but he must fight his battles over again, which he did with great spirit when he saw her fine eyes kindling with enthusiasm, and her lips tremble from sheer sympathy.

Strange to say, nobody knew what it all meant but the old cook, who stood in the doorway leading from the dining-room to the kitchen and watched her young mistress. She went back in the kitchen and said to her husband:

"Ef you want ter see how folks does when dey er in love, go ter de door dar an' look at dat ar chile er our'n."

The old man looked in, watched Miss Mary a moment, and then looked hard at Colonel Cochran.

"I dunno so much 'bout de gal," he said, when he went back, "but dat ar man got mo' in his eye dan what his tongue want ter tell."

And it was so; and, being so, the whole story is told.

THE END.

SKATING.

BY W. R. BARBER.

Across yon waveless lake of light,
Shored by the silver of the snow,
The skaters, in their devious flight,
Like shadows through the moonlight go.
As swift as Arab coursers fleet,
Or falcons in the fields of air,
The plain they spurn with wingèd feet,
As gods might spurn the ether rare.

The bird-forsaken groves are still;
In crystal cells the Naiads sleep;
But wild halloo and laughter shrill
Alive the ancient echoes keep.
The Summer's leafy lips no more,
Kissed by the frolic Zephyrs, sing;
But from yon sounding crystal floor
The skates a livelier music fling.

Now right, now left the figures wheel,
Shod, as it seems, with lambent flame;
Now deftly curve, with trenchant steel,
On Nature's glass some well-loved name.
Here, high in air some athlete twirls
His hickory cudgel in the van,
And there a romp with streaming curls
Cries, "Come and catch me—if you can!"

Though chill the air, in gushes warm,
Through youthful veins the current flows.
Joy lends each voice a rarer charm,
Sport deepens on each cheek the rose.
Ye who in furnace-heated halls
Sigh for your vanished bloom in vain,
Leave your soft seats and gilded walls,
And join the skaters' merry train.

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A Physiognomist's Mistake.

BY A. CRESSY MORRISON.

"I stopped during one of my trips," said the drug drummer, "at one of the oldest hotels in New England, for several days. I have often flattered myself that, backed as I am by constantly meeting new faces and the opportunities for reading character, which it is necessary for a fellow on the road to improve, there are few persons who can size a man up more quickly than I. I had noticed several times, during my stay at the hotel, a fine-looking man, who always came into the dining-room just at the close of the dinner hour. He was about forty-five, with iron-gray hair, dark complexion and very quick and piercing black eyes. He had a queer scar on one cheek; the flesh was torn in three parallel lines, and in healing had left three white marks about half an inch apart and two inches long. I never saw him tip the waiters, nor did I ever see a man receive more obsequious attention from them. He had but to turn his eyes on one of those darkies, and they would fairly jump to show their alert devotion. He had rare taste in the selection of his repast, and when what was chosen was placed before him it always looked as if he had been guided by intuition, for it was invariably the best there was in the house.

"One morning I sat opposite him, struggling with a very tough piece of steak, when, with a kindly smile, he said:

"'Will you permit me to send for a better steak for you? You notice, perhaps, that I have had some success in obtaining a good one for myself,' and he pointed to his juicy bit of tenderloin.

"'You may,' said I, 'for you always have better luck than anyone else.'

"He looked up—every waiter was in an instant ready for instructions. Selecting one with his eyes, he simply pointed to my much mangled steak and quietly resumed his breakfast. He had scarcely done so, when the darky returned, bringing the most delicious piece of meat I have ever seen before or since.

"The next day was Sunday, and after dinner I was wandering aimlessly about, when I espied my friend in the reading-room alone. His feet were on a low window-sill, and, with his chair tipped back, he was looking thoughtfully into the street. I entered, and taking a seat beside him, fell into a conversation. We had chatted some time, when I said:

"'You will pardon me, sir. I have some reputation as a physiognomist, and, having noticed your marvelous control over the waiters, I have formed an opinion of your character and vocation which is very complimentary.'

"'Indeed?'

"'Yes,' I replied, 'and with your permission I will tell you what it is, for I am curious to know if I have reached the right conclusion.'

"'I would like you to tell me very much,' he replied, 'for I am always curious to know how I impress strangers.'

"'Well,' said I, 'your quick, quiet step, your absolute coolness, your power of enforcing obedience and the strong outline of your nose would indicate the 'General,' but your eye is too quick, and your mouth, with the corners indicating curiosity, tempt me to believe that you are a great traveller. I will even venture to say you are a hunter who has sought the largest game. Shall I call you an 'Allan Quartermain,' or an explorer who has striven to benefit the world by discovery in Africa?'

"'Well done,' he answered. 'I am neither an 'Allan Quartermain' nor an explorer, but I have been to Africa. I did not go to hunt or find anything more attractive than dyewood. Of course, I met with some animals and became a good shot, but not a hunter, by any means. Stanley told me once that he could trust me alone with a gun if it wasn't loaded, which was his quaint way of admitting that I could defend myself.'

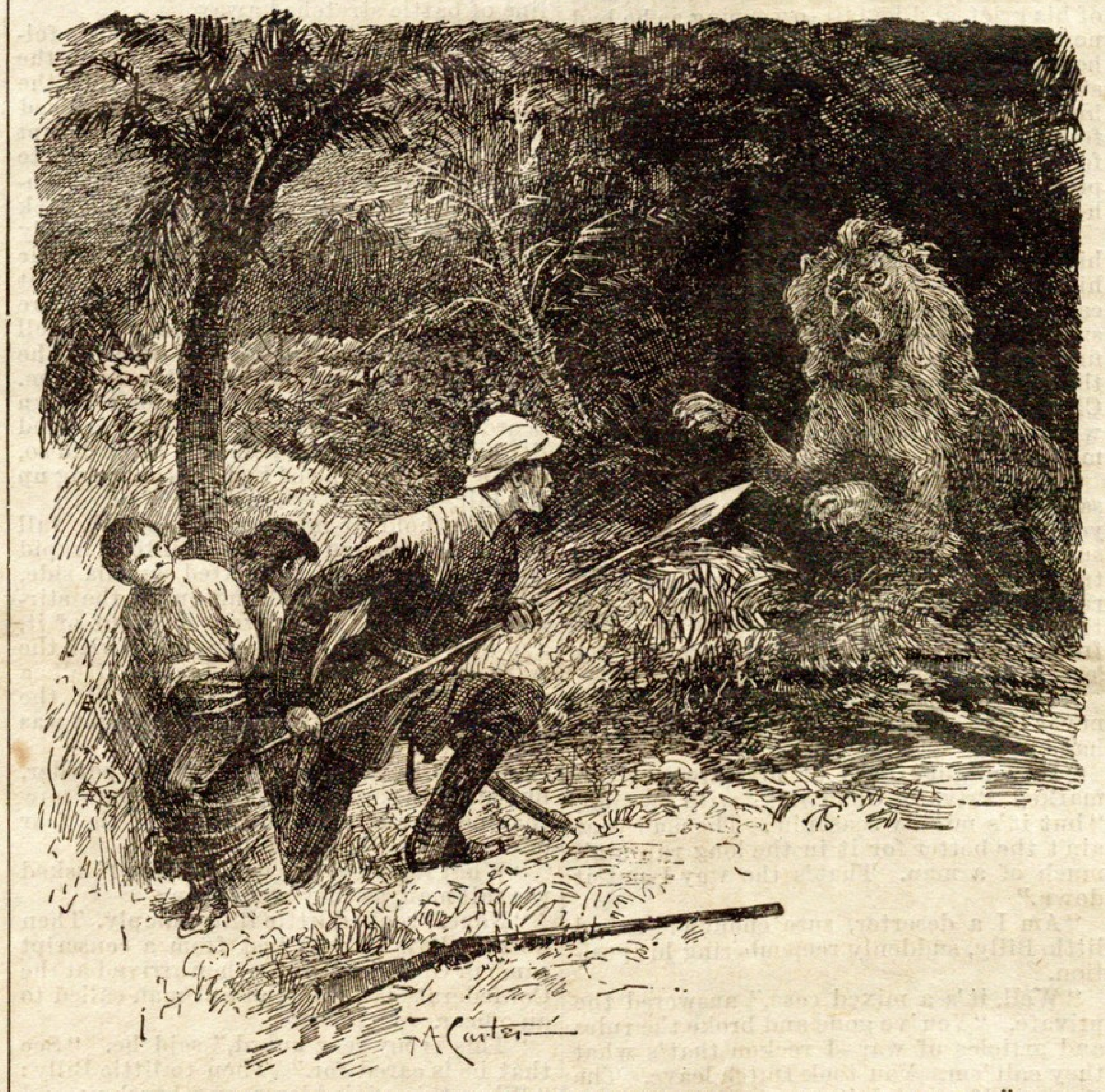
"'Come,' said I, 'do you not think that my remarkable guess is worthy of a story of some of your adventures?'

"'I will tell you one.

"'Before I begin I want to say that I am much amused at the lion stories I read in the papers. The writers have never seen a tropical landscape, a Zulu, or a wild lion, and yet they describe them all at great length, and the papers devote their space to them. I admit they are sometimes very cleverly written, and will do very well for those who do not know where they are at fault, but how can they describe correctly what they have never experienced? I give those writers credit for a marvelously vivid imagination. I will tell you one of my experiences, and you will see that it takes a man who has 'been there' to get the true ring out of even a slight adventure.

"'I had penetrated farther than usual that year, and having met with much success, was on my way to the coast, when one day we came unexpectedly upon a Zulu village. The people were in great excitement, and impelled by curiosity,' (indicated by the turned corner of his mouth, thought I), 'I moved my boats under a bluff, and sent one of my men to ascertain the cause. I learned that this community was about to go to war with a neighboring tribe, and were making ready to sacrifice two children to some spirit whom they wished to aid them in the conquest. Two lions had been prowling around for a day or so, and the chiefs declared that they had been sent to receive the sacrifice as a token of the loyalty of the tribe to their god of war. I determined to prevent such a horrible proceeding if possible. I decided to act alone. I ordered my men to hold the boats in readiness to move at any moment, and at dusk set out on my perilous expedition.

"'The Zulus had formed a sort of procession, and were marching toward a clump of trees about five hundred yards inland, where they proposed to leave the children to be devoured. I was armed with my repeating rifle, a very fine weapon of forty-eight caliber, a cutlass, and a very long and strong Zulu spear. Skirting the wood with great caution, I was rapidly approaching the trees where the procession had now arrived, when I found I must make a long detour to avoid a swampy mud hole, into which I came very near falling. When I succeeded in reaching the spot where the children had been left, it was very dark, and the Zulus had gone. The poor little things were tied to a tree, which stood apart from the clump about twenty-five feet. They were a boy and a girl. The boy was gagged, and the poor little girl was in a dead faint from fright. I was about to cut them loose, when a thundering roar, so near that the ground trembled, made me clutch my spear in horrified surprise. I dared not fire my heavy rifle, except as a last resort, for the report would surely bring the Zulus. I looked toward the brush and saw two eyes, which glowed ominously in the darkness. I placed my spear against the tree, and holding the point in the direction from which the lion must spring, I awaited the attack.



"AS HE WENT INTO THE AIR I MOVED THE SPEAR QUICKLY UNDER HIM."

"'He evidently saw the point of the spear, for he moved uneasily from side to side, as if seeking a chance to jump by it. I followed his motions, till, with an angry snarl, he sat upon his haunches, thus showing his intention to jump *over* it. For a moment he was motionless, and then, good Heaven! he came. As he went into the air, I moved the spear quickly under him. He came down upon it, breaking it in an instant. His great paw struck me'—he put his finger on the queer scar on his cheek—'and I fell with awful force against the little girl. The lion lay motionless, for the spear had entered his heart.

"'I, with some difficulty, extricated myself from under his heavy body, which lay across my legs. I found the girl stone dead, but the boy was unhurt, and I could see by his staring eyes, which showed white even in that darkness, that he appreciated his terrible position.

"'I cut him loose, but left the gag in his mouth, for fear he might cry out. I placed the little fellow on my back and set out for the boats. When I reached the edge of the mud hole, I heard the bushes crackling and knew at once I must face a new danger, and a second growl told me it was the other lion. I hastened on, and had just reached a narrow strip of dry clay between the bushes and the mud hole, when I saw the tell-tale eyes. I got as near the edge of the slimy swamp as possible, and began to have some hopes of escape, when she sprang at me with terrific force. I sprang down and towards her, hoping she would jump over me. She did, and not striking me as she expected, she hit her nose on the hard clay, and turning a complete somersault, fell upon her back into the mud hole. In an instant I dealt her a blow with my cutlass, which added to her confusion. I struck her again, but she dashed the weapon from my hand, and turning over, began to struggle through the soft mud. I knew she would be out and upon me in an instant. I had no recourse but to use my rifle. I took a quick aim, fired, and she fell dead, but whether from the shot or the tremendous blow I had dealt her with the cutlass, I could not say.

"'I picked up the boy, who had fallen in the struggle, and fairly ran toward the boats. I could, however, make but slow progress in the darkness, and besides my wounded face caused me great agony. I had almost reached them, when a tall Zulu loomed up in my path, and the moment he saw the boy he sprang before me. There was no time for hesitation now. I raised my rifle and fired. He gave a frightful yell, and in a moment I found I was pursued. I rushed on and down the bank, just as the foremost Zulu reached the top. I sprang into the boat, which was pushed off at once, and amid a shower of spears, we made our escape. I left the boy at a villager's where I knew he would be well treated, and soon returned to America.'

"Having finished his remarkable story, my friend excused himself, and went upstairs.

"I went to the hotel clerk and asked:

"'What is that gentleman's name?'

"'Smith,' he replied.

"'Who is he?'

"'He is the steward of the house,' was the answer.

"'But he has been a great traveller, has he not?' I asked.

"'Oh, no, he came here a green country boy twenty-five years ago, and has not been away a week since.'

"'How did he get that scar?' I queried.

"'Had a 'scrapping match' with a cook, and the fellow up with a three-tined meat fork and hit him a clip. He is a queer genius,' the clerk continued; 'people always try to size him up, and no matter what they guess he is, he gives them some yarn to fit the occasion.'

"'Give me the key to sixty-six and send up two pitchers of ice water, at once, please.'

"'Look here,' said the clerk, 'what do you want with two pitchers of ice water at four o'clock in the afternoon?'

"'I am going upstairs to soak my head,' I growled; and up I went, madder than a hornet, with the clerk's merry laugh jangling in my ears."

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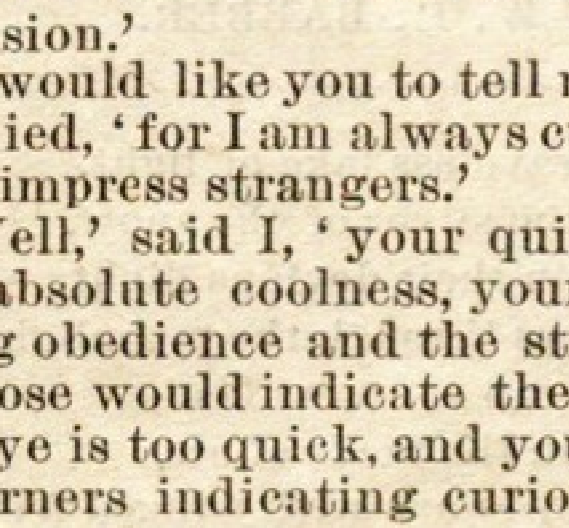
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A New York hotel builder has solved the problem of having every room in the hotel an outside one, but just how to have rapid transit without running it through somebody's street is yet a proposition with nothing to meet it. Possibly the affair will end by running the trolley over the tops of the houses or through a subway. Both of these plans are open to serious objections, and the Boards of Arbitration are at their wits' ends to know just what is best in the premises.

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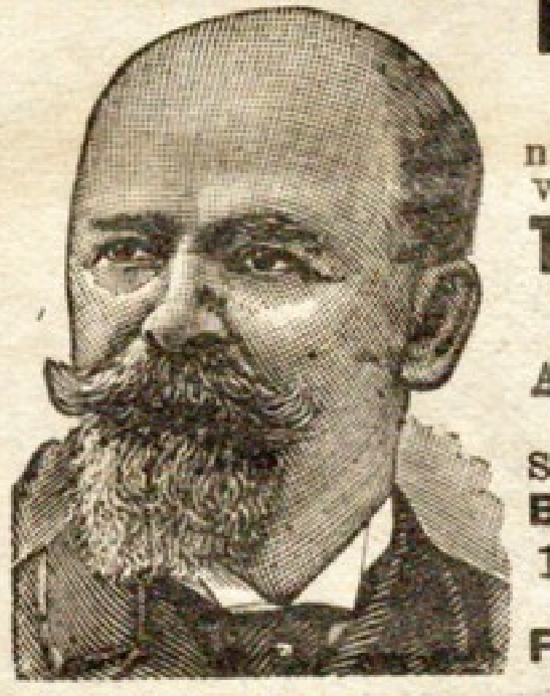

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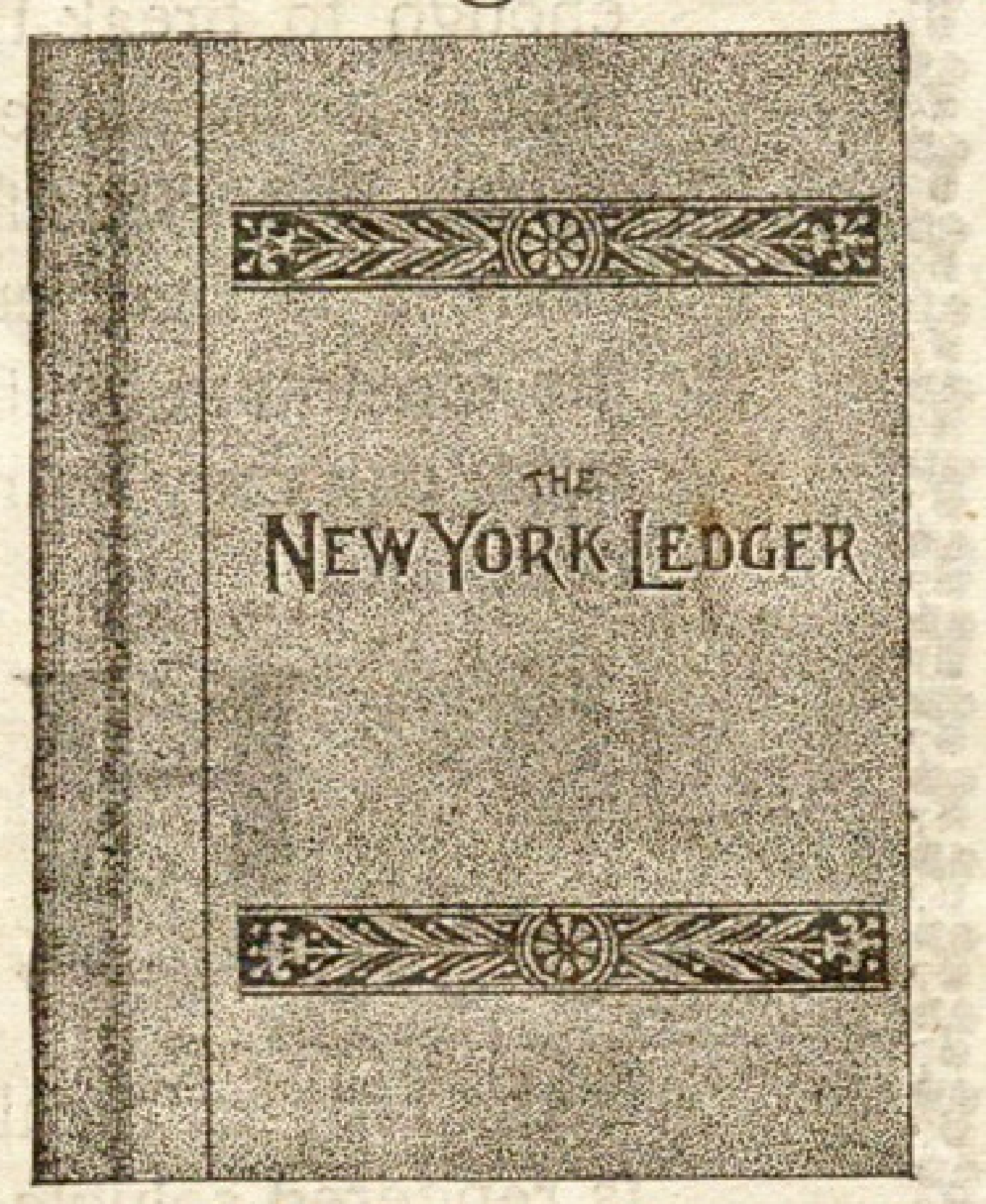

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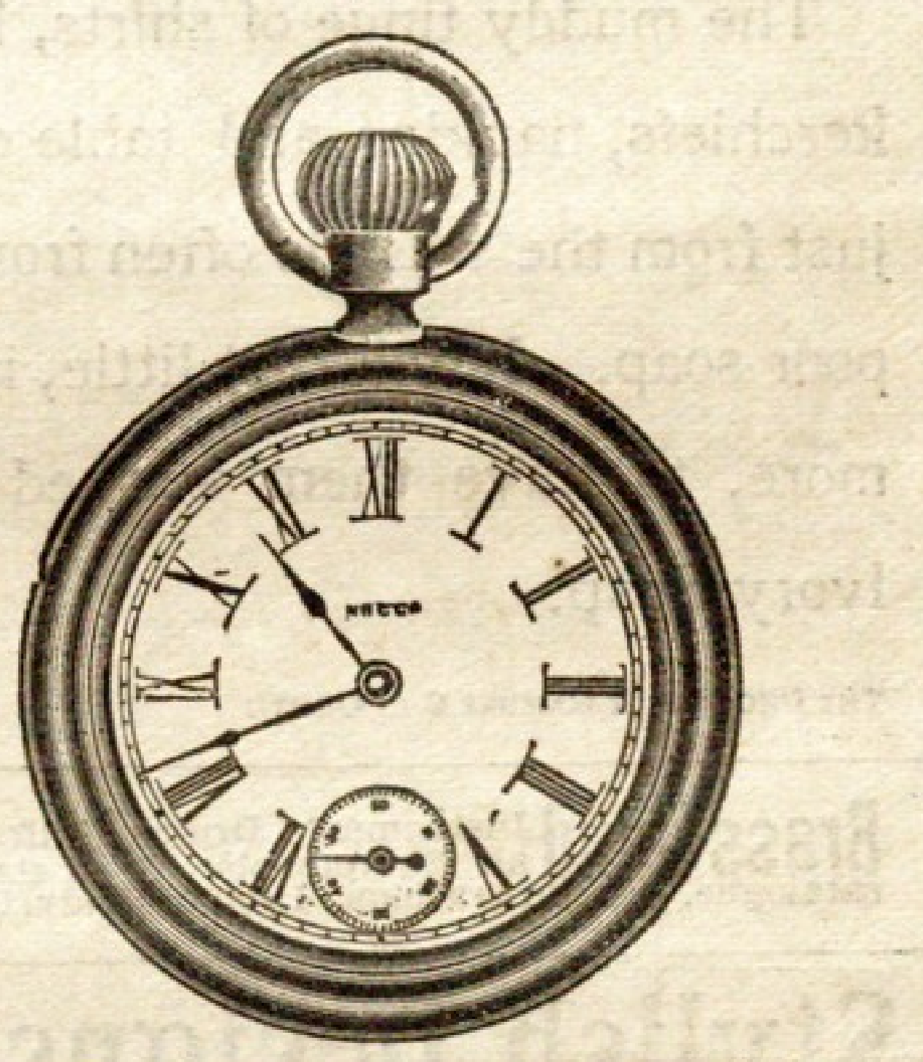

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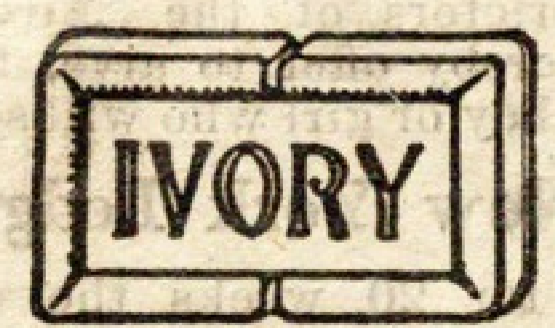

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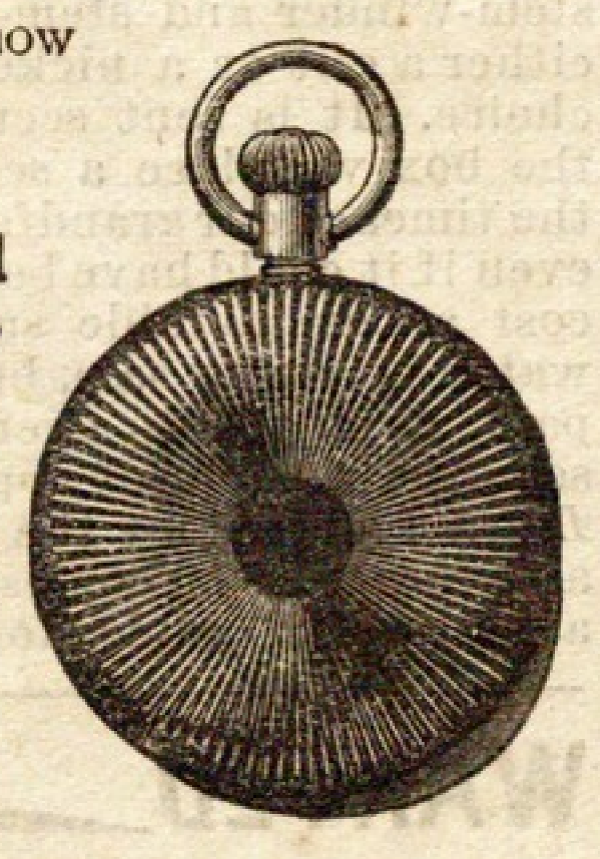

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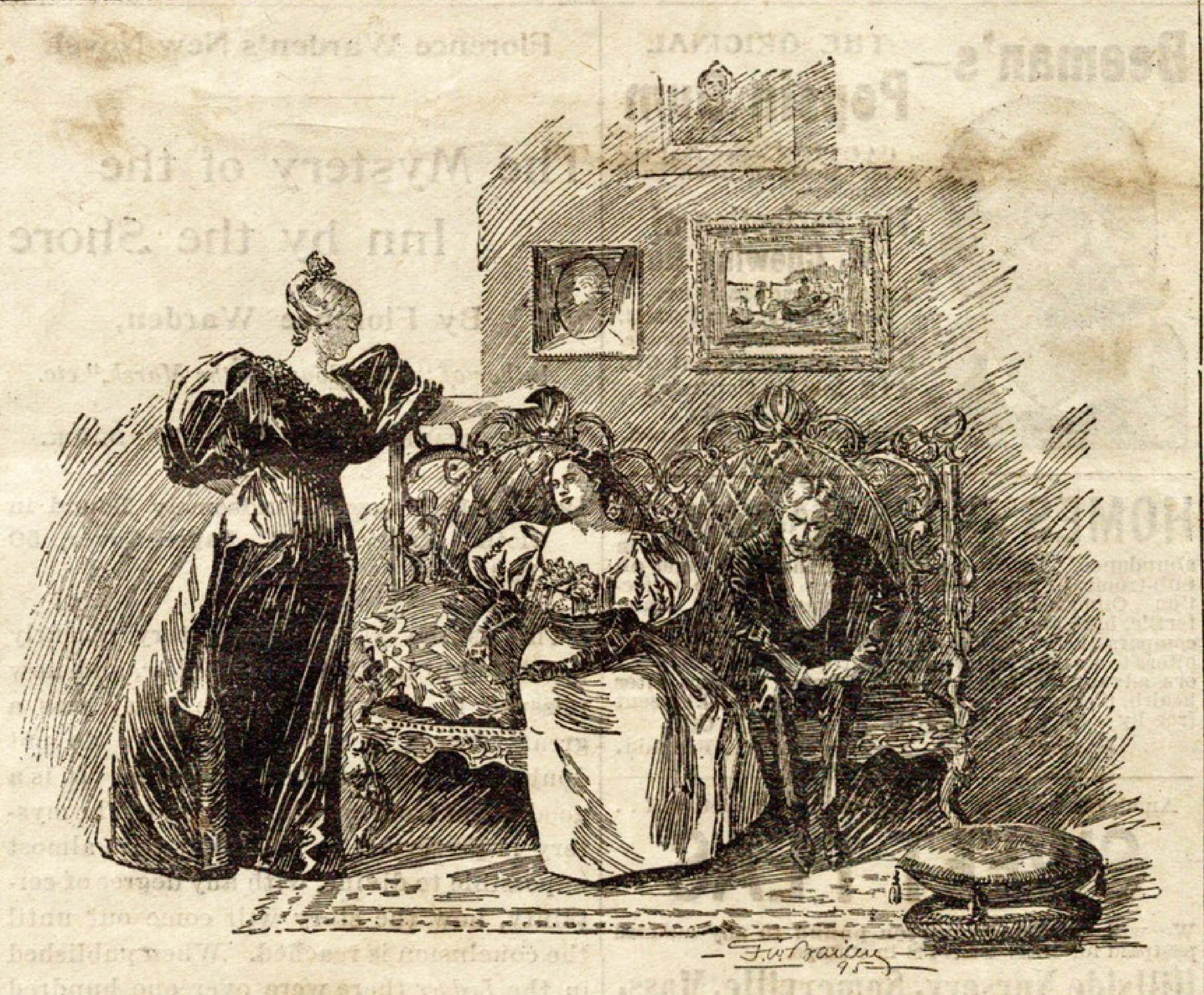

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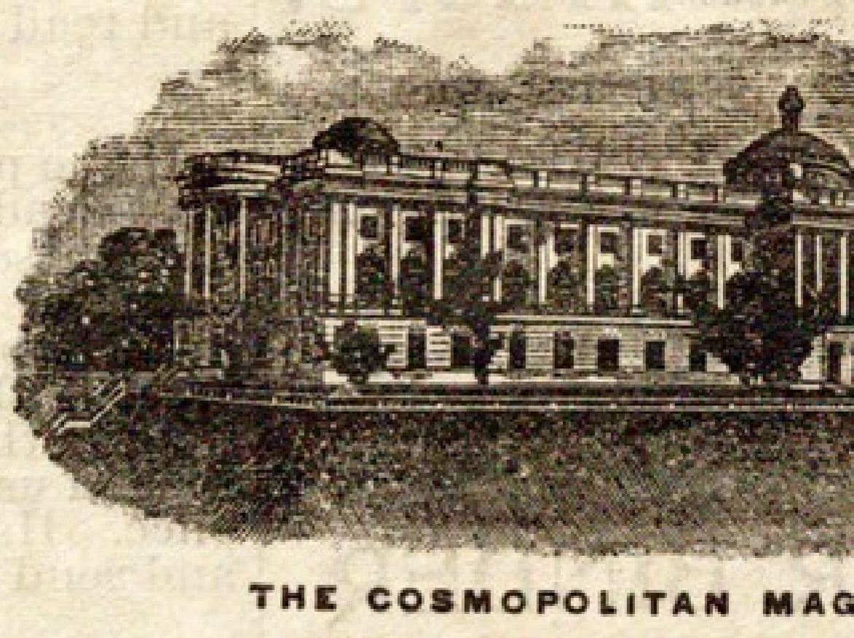

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